



# Blue Lake & Sandbar Lake

Terms of Reference

## **APPROVAL STATEMENT**

This terms of reference provides an outline of Ontario Parks' approach to the review of Blue Lake and Sandbar Lake Provincial Park Management Plans for First Nations, stakeholders, the general public and staff.

The terms of reference identify the tasks to be accomplished, the roles and responsibilities of the project planner and the planning team, budget, as well as the schedule for the completion of the plan review process.

*Signed*

*June 23, 2003*

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Adair Ireland-Smith  
Managing Director  
Ontario Parks

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Date

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# **Blue Lake Provincial Park and Sandbar Lake Provincial Park Management Plan Reviews Terms of Reference**

## **1.0 Introduction**

### ***Blue Lake***

Blue Lake Provincial Park is a recreation class park of 364 hectares. The park is located fifty kilometres west of Dryden, on highway 647, nine kilometres north of the TransCanada Highway close to the town of Vermilion Bay. Area First Nation communities include Wabigoon Lake, Wabauskang, Grassy Narrows (English River), Eagle Lake, Saugeen, and Lac Seul. These First Nations are all within the boundary described by the Treaty #3.

The park was established in 1957, (under Ontario regulation 144/57) and was classified as a recreation park. In 1999, Blue Lake was recommended in Ontario's Living Legacy (P2347) to increase in size by 1,955 hectares, as well as to change the park's classification from recreation to natural environment. When combined with the currently established park area, the total area included within the expanded park complex will be approximately 2,319 hectares. Boundary consultation for the addition was completed in 2000 and regulation is anticipated to occur in 2003/4.

The existing provincial park is well known for its 800-metre long sand beach and the inviting waters of Blue Lake. The expansion of the park will provide a more diverse park experience and meet park size standards for natural environment parks. The site is typical Canadian Shield terrain, with a part of the Eagle-Finlayson Moraine running in a north-west by south-east direction. Dominant tree species found in the area include jack pine with white and black spruce, trembling aspen and cedar found interspersed throughout the site. Locally significant plant species such as orchids and wild ginger are also found in this area. As a result of the naturally occurring association between vegetation and landforms, the expanded park will provide a unique representation of features found within Ecodistrict 4S-4 (Lake Wabigoon Site Region - Upper English River).

Park users are drawn from surrounding communities including Winnipeg, who use the park as a vacation destination for camping, swimming, boating and hiking. The park experiences heavy use in July and August.

### ***Sandbar Lake***

Sandbar Lake Provincial Park is a natural environment class park of 5,083 hectares located 100 kilometres east of the City of Dryden and 12 kilometres northeast of the Town of Ignace. Area First Nations communities include Wabigoon Lake, Wabauskang, Grassy Narrows (English River), Eagle Lake, Saugeen, and Lac Seul. These First Nations are all within the boundary described by the Treaty #3.

The park was first created as a recreation class park of 3,157 hectares in 1970 (Ontario regulation 165/70), and was expanded by 1,926 hectares in 1986. At this time, the park classification was changed from recreation to natural environment. In 1999, Sandbar Lake was recommended in Ontario's Living Legacy (P2295) to increase in size by 3,300

hectares. When combined with currently established park area, and the 263 hectares recommended for deregulation, the total area included within the expanded park complex will be approximately 8,094 hectares. Boundary consultation for the addition was completed in 2000 and regulation is anticipated to occur in 2003/4.

The existing park is characterized by predominantly coniferous forest that lies within the transition zone between the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence and the Boreal forests. The expansion of the existing park area will increase representation and add to park diversity. The addition encompasses a post-glacial outwash plain, which has eroded leaving behind long, narrow sandy beaches. Included in the expansion are various wetland features, weakly to moderately broken outwash deposits and ground moraines, eskers as well as glacial erratics. As a result of the naturally occurring association between vegetation and landforms, the expansion provides a unique representation of features found within Site Regions 3W-2 and 4S-3 (Lake Nipigon Site Region - Lower English River and the Lake Wabigoon Site Region – Northern Coniferous).

Park users are drawn from travelers on the Trans-Canada Highway (17), who use the park as a stopover, as well as by local residents of Ignace and regional residents, who use the park as a camping and day-use destination. The park offers visitors opportunities for hiking, viewing and nature interpretation, as well as camping, picnicking, boating and swimming.

## **2.0 Rationale**

A management plan for **Blue Lake Provincial Park** was completed in 1991, and a management plan for **Sandbar Lake Provincial Park** was completed in 1989. A management plan review is required for both parks to address the significant Ontario's Living Legacy additions to the parks' land bases. Two separate plans will be produced.

The fundamental purpose of these reviews is to re-assess all aspects of these park management plans and to address any new park management issues. This will include but not necessarily be limited to:

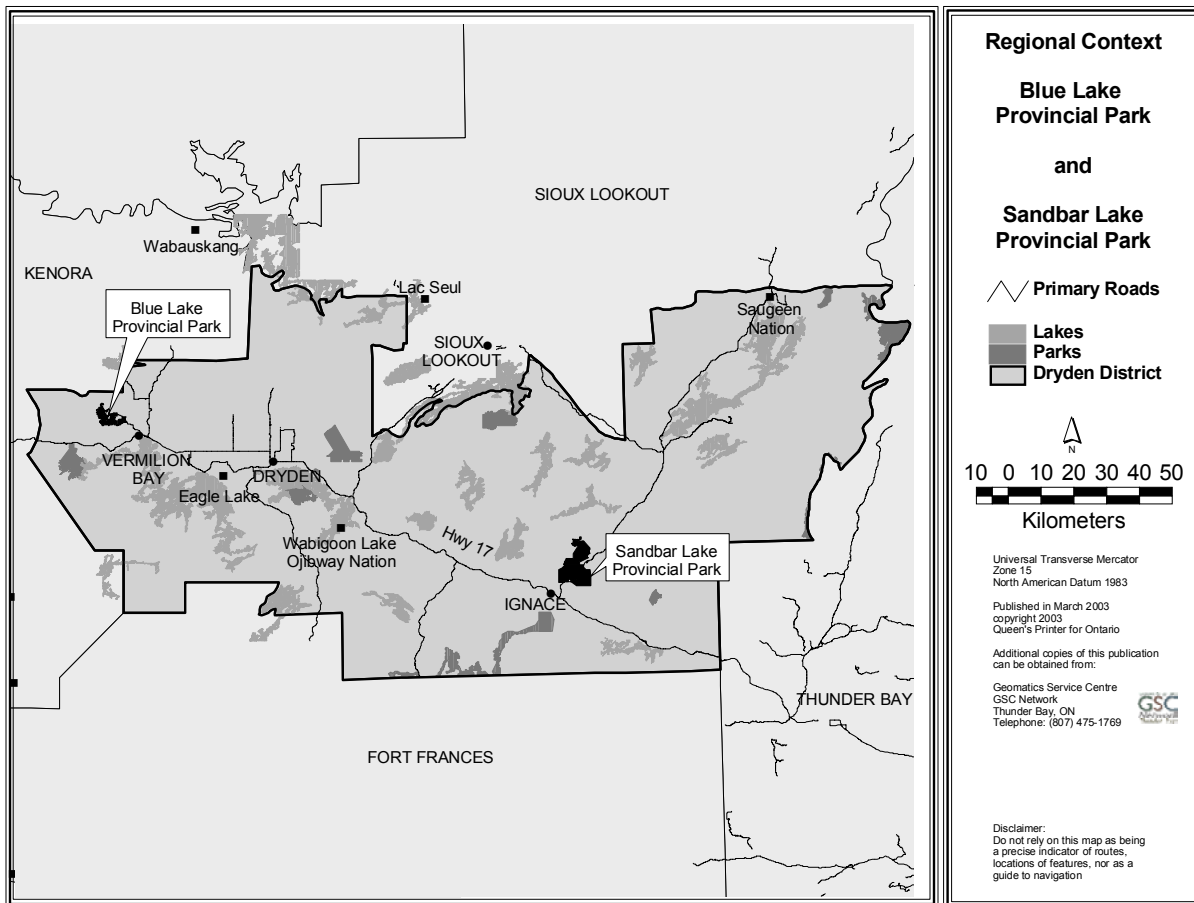
- Classification (Blue Lake);
- Existing zoning, and proposed zoning for the OLL additions in both parks;
- Environmental management, recreation management, and natural heritage education policies;
- Research potential;
- Visitor origins, user patterns, and shoulder season use;
- Cooperating associations (i.e., Friends);
- Nonconforming activities such as the snowmachine trail that traverses a nature reserve zone at Blue Lake;
- Operation of the Ontario Ranger Camp at Sandbar Lake;
- Development policies to address expansion of the campground at Blue Lake by up to 50 sites; camping alternatives (i.e., roofed accommodations, such as rustic cabins at Blue Lake); development of a new Natural Heritage Education facility at Blue Lake; and development of staff accommodation at Sandbar Lake;

- Management and operation of access points in the OLL addition for Sandbar Lake (i.e., Indian Lake);
- Consideration of new business opportunities including links to, and partnership opportunities with, the nearby communities of Ignace (Sandbar Lake), Vermilion Bay (Blue Lake), and the influence of the Ontario Parks' business operating model;
- Vegetation and wildlife management (i.e. use of fire as a management tool, protection of species at risk);
- Park boundary adjustments such as the OLL additions for both parks, as well as the deregulation of portions of Sandbar Lake for expansion of highway 599, and the area west of the 325 road; and,
- Any other issues that arise from public consultation.

The outcome will be to adjust and confirm the long-term direction of the parks' resource stewardship, development and operations activities.

Provincial policy direction and requirements of the *Environmental Assessment Act* and the *Environmental Bill of Rights* will be followed in both the planning process and in the content of the revised management plans. Public and Aboriginal consultation opportunities for the reviews will be in accordance with existing park policies and procedures and will be coordinated where possible.

### 3.0 Plan Area



The plan area for Blue Lake will include all the lands and waters regulated under the Provincial Parks Act as Blue Lake Provincial Park, as well as the area contained within the recommended addition (P2347) to the existing park. Regulation of the Blue Lake addition is anticipated in 2003.

The plan area for Sandbar Lake will include all the lands and waters regulated under the Provincial Parks Act as Sandbar Lake Provincial Park, as well as the area contained within the recommended addition (P2295) to the existing park. Regulation of the Sandbar Lake addition is anticipated in 2003.

## **Planning Team**

The planning team will be comprised of:

- Scott Ellery, Park Superintendent, Blue Lake and Sandbar Lake Provincial Parks
- Jim Peck, Assistant Park Superintendent, Blue Lake and Sandbar Lake Provincial Parks
- Martin Pell, Dryden District Planner
- Michèle Proulx, Northwest Zone Park Management Planner

Technical/professional advice will be sought from advisors on an as required basis from the following areas: Dryden, Ignace and Vermilion Bay, MNR Dryden District, Ministry of Northern Development & Mines, Ministry of Transportation, MNR Regional Engineering and others as required.

The northwest zone park management planner, as the project planner, will be responsible for the preparation, production and distribution of all planning documents, as well as for supervising the planning process. The team will undertake the compilation, evaluation and development of background information, and revised park management plans, and will ensure that public consultation occurs as scheduled. The planning team will review all draft documents, assist in issue resolution, and make recommendations to the Zone Manager as required.

## **5.0 Integration**

To ensure that the plan reviews are outward looking and inclusive, and that all resource management interests are addressed, the planning team will undertake meaningful liaison with First Nations, park users, adjacent landowners, residents of the nearby communities, and other interested parties and stakeholders. The following documents should be references for the process:

- *Crown Land Use Atlas 2003.*
- *Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies.* MNR 1992.
- *Ontario Provincial Parks Park Management Planning Manual.* MNR 1994.
- *Blue Lake Provincial Park Management Plan.* MNR 1991.
- *Blue Lake Provincial Park Business Plan.* MNR revised 1996/97 – 2000/01.
- *Sandbar Lake Provincial Park Management Plan.* MNR 1989.
- *Sandbar Lake Provincial Park Business Plan.* MNR 1996/97 – 2000/01.
- *Dryden Forest Management Plan,* MNR.

- *English River Forest Management Plan, MNR.*
- *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy MNR July 1999.*

## 6.0 Planning Process

Stage in Planning Process	Description & Products	Consultation / Communications	Timetable
Terms of Reference	Document summarizing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rationale, planning area, planning team, advisory team, communications requirements, project schedule</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitation to Participate</li> <li>• Public Notice: Opportunity to Inspect Approved Terms of Reference</li> <li>• EBR Notice of Proposal</li> </ul>	Summer 2003
Background Information, and Issues and Options	Document summarizing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• natural, cultural, recreational values</li> <li>• social /economic impact and market analysis</li> <li>• identification of issues and options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Notice: Opportunity to Review Background Information, and Issues and Options</li> <li>• EBR Notice Update</li> </ul>	Autumn 2003
Preliminary Park Management Plans	Draft documents summarizing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• classification, goal, objectives, zoning</li> <li>• draft resource stewardship, operations and development policies</li> <li>• identification of immediate priorities</li> <li>• summary of consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Notice: Opportunity to Review Preliminary Management Plans</li> <li>• EBR Notice Update</li> </ul>	Spring 2004
Approved Park Management Plans	Final documents summarizing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• as above, incorporating additional public consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Notice: Opportunity to Inspect Approved Management Plans</li> <li>• EBR Decision Notice</li> <li>• Distribution of Approved Park Management Plans</li> </ul>	Autumn 2004

## 7.0 Consultation

To ensure that First Nation and public consultation requirements are met, First Nation and public involvement shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, four formal opportunities to provide input during the plan review process. These four opportunities include invitation to participate, opportunity to review background information and the issues and options, opportunity to review the preliminary management plans and opportunity to inspect the approved management plan. In addition, depending upon the results of the Background Information in terms of values and issues, a workshop may be planned prior to the development of the Preliminary Plan to discuss issues and options with interest groups.

Each of these stages has specific consultation and communication requirements identified in the *Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual (1994)*. Communications will be accomplished through target group mail-outs, general media postings of the invitation to

participate, as well as invitations to review, and by other means if the need arises. These measures will be described in a communications plan for the plan reviews.

### **Plan Review Contact List**

Park Policy PM 11.02.02 prescribes mandatory contacts to receive First Nation and public notices and any planning documents associated with the plan review process. These mandatory contacts are First Nations and stakeholder or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with provincial interests. This list is supplemented by recommendations from park and district office staff, and augmented by a contact list of local individuals, groups, and park users that will evolve in the course of consultation. In the case of this management plan review, examples of this include First Nations, adjacent landowners, the communities of Ignace, Dryden, and Vermilion Bay, the Ministry of Transportation, the Ministry of Culture, and the Sunset Country Travel Association.

### **Use of Media**

All formal public notices will be included in the Dryden and in Thunder Bay newspapers.

### **EBR Registry**

The *Environmental Bill of Rights* electronic registry will be used to post the registry proposal file and updates associated with the Invitation to participate, the background information and the issues and options, the preliminary park management plans. As well, the registry decision file will be posted when the approved park management plans are released. These postings provide opportunities for input into the planning process.

### **Internal Distribution**

Standard briefing notes will be used to inform / advise area, district, zone and main office staff of significant developments (e.g. release of public documents) in the review process.

## **8.0 Staff and Budget**

The project planner will be responsible for the preparation of all documents associated with the plan review process, as well as arranging map work, coordinating consultation, preparing ads and public notices and liaison with marketing and communications section, planning and research section, and communications services branch (CSB) as required.

The park superintendent will be responsible for answering public inquiries, providing logistical support, assisting in the collection of information and liaison with the Dryden District. The planning team members will be responsible for the review of all public notices and documents, and for making recommendations to the Northwest Zone Manager, Ontario Parks.

Funds have been allocated for printing, map making, and public consultation.