

September 29, 2005

SUBJECT: Invitation to Review and Comment on the O'Donnell Point Preliminary Park Management Plan and Proposed Crown Land Disposition

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) (both Parry Sound District and Ontario Parks) is inviting comments on a *preliminary park management plan* and a proposed Crown land disposition. Ontario Parks is developing a park management plan for O'Donnell Point Provincial Nature Reserve. The purpose of the park planning process is to confirm the park's resource stewardship, operations and development policies, and identify its contributions to the achievement of the Ontario Provincial Parks system objectives – *protection, heritage appreciation, recreation and tourism*. The MNR has also received an application from Moose Deer Point First Nation for additional lands to consolidate their reserve. This Crown land disposition proposal includes a *proposed disposition of Crown land notice*, a *Draft supplement to an Environmental Study Report* and a *proposed land use amendment*.

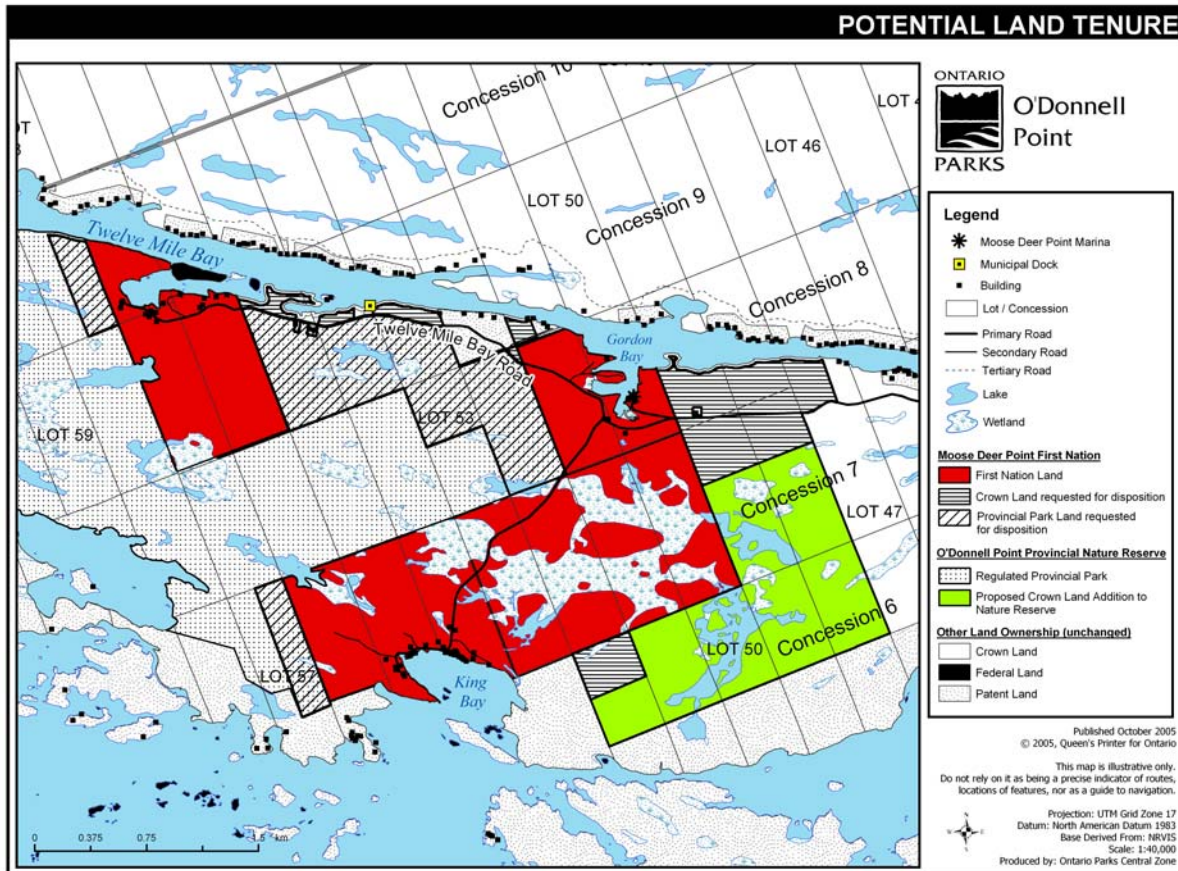
O'Donnell Point is located on a peninsula along the eastern shoreline of Georgian Bay. The peninsula is located 50 kilometres south of Parry Sound and 27 kilometres north of Port Severn. O'Donnell Point can be accessed from Twelve Mile Bay Road off Highway 69/400. O'Donnell Point Provincial Nature Reserve is an 875-hectare nature reserve class park. The nature reserve was officially established in 1985 with its designation under the *Provincial Parks Act*, and is presently described in Ontario Regulation No. 81/85 Schedule No. 176. The park is currently managed according to the *O'Donnell Point Provincial Nature Reserve Interim Management Statement* (1998).

The Crown land disposition proposal includes the disposition of approximately 160 ha from O'Donnell Point Provincial Nature Reserve lands and approximately 100 ha of other Crown land (see map below). The intent is to transfer the lands to the Government of Canada for addition to the Moose Deer Point First Nation Reserve. A separate parcel approximately 180 ha of Crown land would be added to the nature reserve. The land use amendment details the proposed deletions and additions to the various Crown land use designations (e.g. nature reserve and enhanced management areas).

There are four major points to consider when evaluating the proposals and formulating your comments.

- The Crown lands proposed for addition to the nature reserve have been evaluated by Ontario Parks. The results of the ecological assessment identified that the proposed new nature reserve area would be beneficial because of the increased percentage of wetland habitats, which are important for the significant species found in O'Donnell Point.
- The First Nation lands between the two proposed nature reserve parcels is zoned as environmental protection and nature interpretation in the *Moose Deer Point First Nation Land Use Plan*.
- The 20 m (66 foot) shore road allowance along Twelve Mile Bay is not included in the proposed disposition, since it is owned by the municipality of Georgian Bay.
- The proposed lands for disposition would be managed under the Moose Deer Point First Nation through their *Land Use Plan*. This land use plan's restrictions and protection measures are equal to and in some cases exceeds the by-laws of the adjacent municipalities and the legal requirements of provincial and federal law. In addition, the

normal regulations and acts that normally apply to the Moose Deer Point First Nation Reserve will apply to the proposed added lands, such as *Fisheries Act*, *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, and *Species at Risk Act*. As an example, an environmental impact statement would be required under the land use plan when an area previously undeveloped for residential, commercial, institutional, or industrial use is proposed for development. This will also trigger notification of the MNR and local municipality under the O'Donnell Point Notification Protocol.



You are invited to attend a Public Open House to view further information and to discuss the project with MNR staff, at either the *Moose Deer Point First Nation Administration Office* on *October 15* from *9AM to 3PM* or at the *Ramada Hotel and Conference Centre – Don Valley* in *Toronto* on *October 22* from *9AM to 3PM*. Comments must be received within a 60-day comment period, which will expire on *December 13, 2005*.

The consultation documents are available at the MNR Parry Sound District and Central Zone park office during normal business hours, or on the internet at http://www.OntarioParks.com/english/odon_planning.html and http://crownlanduseatlas.mnr.gov.on.ca/amendments/2005_13.html. The documents are also available at the MacTier and Parry Sound public libraries.

To obtain a copy of the consultation documents, to discuss the project, to submit comments, or to be placed on the mailing list, please contact:

Richard Doucette, Assistant Planner
Ontario Parks

Mike Foley, Superintendent
Oastler Lake Provincial Park

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OR

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For information specifically on the proposed Crown land disposition, please contact:

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The preliminary park management plan was prepared in accordance with the Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual (1994).

The preliminary park management plan, Crown land disposition notice, supplement document, and land use amendment are consistent with MNR's requirements under the Environmental Assessment Act. These are set out in Exemption Order MNR-59/2, Exemption Order MNR-26/7 and the transition provisions of the Class Environmental Assessment for MNR Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects as they apply to processes begun under MNR 26/7.

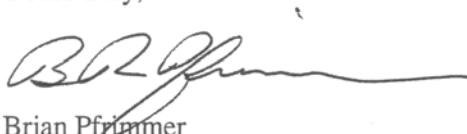
The supplement document contributes to the requirements set out in Ontario Parks' policy for the Preparation of Implementation Plans (PM 11.03.01).

The supporting documents are also intended to fulfil part of the public consultation requirements for amendments to MNR land use direction under the Crown Land Use Policy Atlas.

Comments and personal information regarding this project are collected under the authority of the Environmental Assessment Act, the Provincial Parks Act and Public Lands Act to assist in making decisions. Comments and opinions which do not constitute personal information as defined by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, will be shared among MNR and others as appropriate, and may be included in project documentation that is made available for public review. Personal information will remain confidential unless prior consent to disclose is obtained. This information may be used by the MNR to seek public input on other resource management surveys and projects.

The public will be provided with one final opportunity to inspect the approved park management plan and the final Supplement to the Final Environmental Study Report. However, interested parties are strongly encouraged to discuss any concerns with MNR at this time.

Yours truly,



Brian Pfriemmer
Zone Manager
Ontario Parks, Central Zone



Andy Heerschap
A/District Manager
MNR, Parry Sound District



O'DONNELL POINT PROVINCIAL NATURE RESERVE

Background Information

Fall 2005

The proposal

- This preliminary park management plan contains an important proposal to add to the reserve lands of Moose Deer Point First Nation.
- The proposed addition would comprise both nature reserve lands (requiring de-regulation) and Crown lands.
- Three options are under consideration.
 - Status quo: no disposition of Crown or provincial park lands.
 - Disposition of 440 ha: 160 ha of provincial parks lands and 280 ha of Crown lands, all to the First Nation.
 - Disposition of 260 ha: 160 ha of provincial parks lands and 100 ha of Crown lands to the First Nation; and addition of 180 ha of Crown lands to the provincial park.
- After considerable public consultation, the third option is recommended for the following reasons:
 - increase in First Nation lands for social and economic benefits
 - joins three separate parcels of reserve lands;
 - addition to the total lands within Parks designation; and
 - significant increase in the total protected area within both Parks and First Nation lands.
- The processes for Addition-to-Reserve, Park Management Planning and Crown Land Disposition have been combined to streamline the process and to ensure that all factors have been considered in the decision: social, environmental, and economic.

History

- In July 2000, the Moose Deer Point First Nation submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) an addition-to-reserve proposal requesting the disposition of nature reserve and Crown lands for addition to their Reserve lands. This addition was requested to address social, economic and land use planning concerns associated with their small, separated land base.
- The park management planning process for O'Donnell Point Provincial Nature Reserve was initiated in September 2001.

- The public has had the opportunity to provide comments to the *Background Information, Issues and Options* in December 2001 and the *Preliminary Environmental Study Report (ESR)* in November 2002.
- Since the start of the park management planning and Crown land disposition processes in 2001, three initiatives have been initiated; *O'Donnell Point Notification Protocol*, the *O'Donnell Point Ecosystem Protection group*, and *Moose Deer Point First Nation Land Use Plan*.
- The *notification protocol* is an important agreement between local municipalities, Moose Deer Point First Nation and the MNR. It provides direction for notification between these parties on proposed developments (i.e. zoning, roads, residential, commercial or industrial developments, or amendments to the park management plan).
- The *ecosystem protection group* supports the conservation and stewardship of habitats and processes of the surrounding ecosystem, and provides a discussion forum of stakeholders related to the health of the O'Donnell Point ecosystem.
- The *Moose Deer Point First Nation Land Use Plan* is similar in scope to a municipality's official plan. This plan requires development be done in an environmentally-friendly way that is equal to and in some ways exceeds the by-laws of the adjacent municipalities and the legal requirements of provincial and federal law. The plan establishes zones for residential and commercial activities as well as for environmental protection. Public comments received during the open houses were incorporated in the establishment of these zones such as increased set backs along shoreline and wetlands and no residential zoning near wetlands. The approvals process and the enforcement section will contribute significantly to the mitigation measures recommended in the Final ESR.

Current Public Consultation

- This stage of consultation includes the following public consultation documents:
 - *preliminary park management plan* - contains all the proposed policies and direction statements for the long-term management of O'Donnell Point Provincial Nature Reserve;
 - *draft supplement to the final environmental study report* - adds to the *Final ESR* by including analysis and evaluation of more resource data, an additional alternative identified by MNR, MNR's responses to comments received during the *Preliminary ESR*, a proposed preferred alternative, and a summary of results achieved thus far;

- *proposed disposition of crown land notice* - invites public comment regarding Moose Deer Point First Nation request for Crown lands; and
- *land use amendment* – proposes changes to Crown land uses under the Crown Land Use Policy Atlas.
- The consultation documents are available on the following websites: http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/odon_planning.html and http://crownlanduseatlas.mnr.gov.on.ca/amendments/2005_13.html.
- The lands proposed for disposition and addition in the third alternative were evaluated and deemed to provide a net increase in the value of the park. The significant species from the nature reserve are dependent for most of their life on wetland, shoreline or moist habitats. The proposed deletions to the nature reserve are dry upland habitats.
- The proposed options do not include the shore road allowance along Twelve Mile Bay or any private lands.
- The preliminary park management plan proposes the establishment of a formal access zone on the north side of the nature reserve in a sheltered bay approximately 1.6 km from the most western point. The old access site on the south side of O'Donnell point Nature Reserve is scheduled for decommissioning in the fall of 2005.

Next Steps

- Once the public consultation period is over, the submitted comments will be reviewed and the final documents will be prepared.
- The last stage of the park planning process is the *Approved Park Management Plan*. It will contain official approved direction for the management of O'Donnell Point Provincial Nature Reserve. The public will be invited for a final inspection of the *Approved Park Management Plan* and be given an opportunity (minimum of 45 days) to submit an appeal to the Minister of Natural Resources.
- The public will be given an opportunity to inspect the *Supplement to the Final Environmental Study Report* and to submit a Part II Order (i.e. Bump-up) request (within a minimum of 30 days) to the Minister of Environment
- The approval of the Crown land disposition and the land use amendment will follow pending the outcome of the completion of the requirements for the Environmental Assessment Act, which includes the *supplement to the final environmental study report* and the *Approved Park Management Plan*.