



Quetico

Fire Management Plan

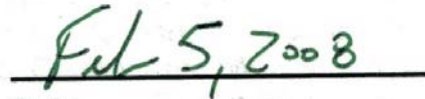
Terms of Reference

Approval Statement

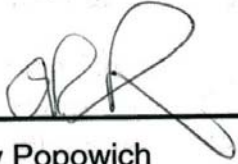
The Quetico Park Terms of Reference will serve as direction for considering and documenting the role of fire within Quetico Provincial Park. A full review of the Quetico Fire Management Plan (1997) and Fire Operations Plan (2007) will occur throughout the fall of 2007 and the 2008 Fire Season to be implemented for the 2009 Fire Season.



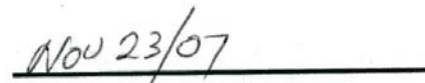
Tim Sullivan
Northwest Zone Manager, Ontario Parks



Date



Terry Popowich
Program Manager - West Fire Region



Date

Introduction

Quetico Provincial Park is a wilderness class park that provides both back country and campground camping experiences. Located in the judicial district of Rainy River and within the Fort Frances District of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Quetico encompasses 475,782 hectares of rugged Canadian Shield. The park is located in the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Forest and is in a transition zone with the Boreal Forest to the north and the Great Plains to the south and west. The park is bounded by: the Ontario-Minnesota border and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in the south; the Thunder Bay Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) District boundary in the east; a section of the Park boundary abuts Highway 11 to the north; and the Namakan River and Lac La Croix First Nations Reserve to the west.

As per the Fire Management Strategy for Ontario (2004), Quetico Provincial Park is part of the Parks Fire Management Zone which was created to recognize the fact that fire is an essential ecological process fundamental to ecosystem health and sustainability. Fire management activities for all fires that occur within Quetico are directed through the Quetico Fire Management Plan (1997) and Fire Operations Plan (1999). In the absence of an approved Fire Management Plan for the park, the fire strategy for the surrounding fire management zone will apply.

Since the approval of the Quetico Fire Management Plan in 1997, new policies and guidelines have been implemented that influence this plan. In particular, a Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves (2004) was approved which influences the type, duration and consultation requirements of projects (e.g. prescribed fire, monitoring and modified response) that occur within any protected areas. As such, a formal review of the direction of the projects outlined in a plan is required after 10 years. Guidelines for Fire Management Planning in Provincial Parks and Conservations Reserves (in prep) are being developed to provide planning direction for fire management in protected areas. *A Technical Guideline for Cultural Heritage Resources for Projects Planned Under the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves (2006)* will be used to identify, assess the significance, and develop mitigation techniques for cultural heritage resources within the park that may be impacted by fire management activities.

An approved fire management plan is an appropriate resource management tool for Quetico Provincial Park, one that is consistent with Ontario's Fire Management Strategy, the Provincial Park and Conservation Reserves Act (2007) and Fire Management Policy for Parks and Conservation Reserves (2004) FM 2:12. A fire management plan for Quetico Provincial Park is necessary to continue to restore and maintain the ecological integrity of the park by maintaining a shifting mosaic of healthy vegetation patches and conserving biological diversity within the park. Most importantly, a fire management plan provides direction to safely allow the ecological role of fire while providing for the protection of Park visitors, staff and human and cultural values within the park and on adjacent lands.

Several values exist both within and adjacent to Quetico Park which receive thorough assessments in order to ensure there will be minimal to no negative impacts from fire. Five entry stations are located around the perimeter of the park, and one within the community of Atikokan (Park Headquarters). Dawson Trail and Lac La Croix entry stations are road accessible, while the remaining three entry stations, Beaverhouse, Cache Bay and Prairie Portage, are water accessible only. These stations are divided into 22 entry points to further distribute visitors throughout the park. Dawson Trail includes 107 campsites, numerous interpretive trails, and an assortment of structures including a staff house, warehouse, comfort stations, and interpretive centre. Historical ranger cabins are located on Basswood Lake and an abandoned fire tower exists on both McKenzie and Beaverhouse Lake. A fire tower located on Kahshahpiwi Lake is utilized as a repeater tower and supports an automatic MNR fire weather station. Other values within Quetico Park include trapping cabins, numerous archaeological and cultural sites, significant earth science and life science features that could be considered as nature reserve zones within the park, and endangered species habitat.

In order to minimize potential for social, economic and environmental impacts outside of park boundaries, values adjacent to Quetico Park also receive careful consideration. These values include the community of Atikokan, Lac La Croix, residential properties on the Hwy 11 corridor and surrounding area, and associated infrastructure. Timber values exist to the north and west of the park in the Fort Frances district, and to the east in the Thunder Bay district. The Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness is situated south of Quetico Park in the Superior National Forest and Voyageurs National Park is to the west. Located in Minnesota, these two protected areas have Fire Management Plans in place stating that under pre-determined conditions, lightning caused fires may be allowed to burn, similar to those in Quetico Park.

In 1997, the first Quetico Provincial Park Fire Management Plan was approved. This plan acknowledges the ecological role of fire and provides the framework to allow fire to play a more natural role in the park's forest ecosystem. Fire management in Quetico directs those fires which are allowed to burn (monitored), those which are deliberately ignited and those fires which will receive a full response and sustained action until declared out. For the last 10 years, the Quetico Fire Management Plan has guided fire management decisions on the Quetico land base and has successfully and safely reintroduced fire to these fire dependent forests.

A planning team consisting of both park and fire staff has been tasked with the review of the 1997 Quetico Fire Management Plan. This review will consider new fire science research and fire monitoring that has occurred within the last 10 years; legislative and policy changes; and comments received from the public, research communities and other government organizations. The Quetico Provincial Park Fire Management Plan Terms of Reference will direct this team as to specific roles and responsibilities associated with this project.

The new Quetico Fire Management Plan will provide more direction that is consistent with the new Provincial Park and Conservation Reserves Act (2007) for planning.

Additionally, this plan will provide comprehensive fire management planning and will make the best use of fire management tools (e.g. fire response and use) to ensure ecological integrity within the park and to meet park management objectives.

Roles and Responsibilities

Review of the 1997 Quetico Fire Management Plan and preparation of the 2007 Quetico Fire Management Plan will be undertaken by a core planning team consisting of representatives from Quetico Provincial Park staff, Fort Frances fire management staff and Regional fire personnel. The planning team consists of:

Dave Maynard	Assistant Park Superintendent, Quetico Provincial Park (chair)
Jennifer Young	West Fire Region Fire Science and Planning Specialist, AFFM
Marney Brown	A/Fire Operations Supervisor, Fort Frances, AFFM
Sarah Herr	Operations Specialist, Quetico Provincial Park
Lisa Solomon	Biologist, Quetico Provincial Park

Quetico's Assistant Park Superintendent will lead the overall review and development of the fire management plan for the park. The Quetico Park Operations Specialist will be responsible for the preparation, collation, and distribution of all planning documents for the team to ensure consistent writing and editing of the plan. The remainder of the core planning team will be assigned sections of the plan to review and or write and will provide these sections to the Operations Specialist as they are completed to incorporate in the plan.

Due to the complex nature of fire management within Quetico, technical/professional advice will be sought from advisors on an as required basis during plan development. The following planning team advisors include:

Name	Position	Technical/Professional Advice
Gerry Leroux	Fire Behaviour/PB Specialist, West Fire Region	Fire Behaviour; prescribed fire prescription development
Garth Wintle	Intelligence Specialist, West Fire Region	Prescribed fire prescription development; fire response/operations advice
Julie Sullivan	Park Zone Planner, Thunder Bay Regional Office	Review Plan to ensure meets Park planning legislative requirements; provide advice on consultation requirements
Steve Kingston	NW Zone Ecologist	To provide consistency with zone research objectives
Rob Davis	Senior Coordinator, Science and Information, Ontario Parks Peterborough	To provide provincial fire in parks direction

The purpose of this project is to examine the current fire management plan for Quetico Provincial Park, evaluate options within the plan and ensure that the resource management objectives for the park are being met through the fire management plan. Specifically, the team will:

- review the 1997 Quetico Fire Management Plan and evaluate fire management goals, objectives and options for the park to determine if these continue to meet the needs of the park;
- prepare a Statement of Fire Intent for Quetico to consider and document the role of fire within the park;
- prepare a new fire management plan that incorporates changes to legislation and policy since the approval of the current plan;
- meet public consultation requirements under the *Class EA for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves* and ensure the consultation process is consistent with the *Guidelines for Fire Management Planning for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*; and the *Provincial Parks Planning Manual (in prep)*;
- prepare an amendment for the 1997 Quetico Fire Management Plan to allow prescribed and managed fire within Quetico for the 2008 fire season while the new fire plan is reviewed and developed;
- develop a fire operations plan to reflect the goals and objectives in the new fire management plan for Quetico.

Planning Schedule

The planning process for the review and development of any fire management planning in protected areas involves a number of steps to ensure proper consideration and documentation of role of fire within the planning area occurs. The completion of the Quetico Fire Management Plan is anticipated for October 2008 and the supporting fire operations plan in May 2009. Full implementation of the Quetico Park Fire Management Plan is anticipated for the 2009 Fire Season.

Terms of Reference Approval	November 2007
Statement of Fire Intent (SFI)	November 2007
SFI Approval	December 2007
EBR Policy Proposal	February 2008
Draft Fire Management Plan	March 2008
Review of draft Fire Management Plan	April/May 2008
Final review and approval	Sept/October 2008
EBR Policy Decision	November 2008
EA Notice of Completion	November 2008
Draft Fire Operations Plan	January 2009
Review and final edits Fire Ops Plan	Feb/March 2009
Approval of Fire Ops Plan	April/May 2009

The following tables show the work break down structure in more detail than listed above.

2007

	Sept	October					November				December			
	26-30	1-5	8-12	15-19	21-26	29-2	5-16		19-23	26-30	3-7	10-14	17-21	24-28
Preliminary Scoping Meeting														
Development of Terms of Reference														
Review and Approval of Terms of Reference														
Develop Statement of Fire Intent														
Approval of Statement of Fire Intent														
EBR Policy Proposal/EA Public Notice														
Develop draft Fire Management Plan														

2008

	January				February				March				April				
	7-11	14-18	21-25	28-1	4-8	11-15	18-22	25-29	3-7	10-14	17-21	24-28	31-4	7-11	14-18	21-25	28-2
Develop draft Fire Management Plan																	
EBR Policy Proposal/EA Public Notice																	
Internal Review of draft Fire Management Plan																	
External Review of draft Fire Management Plan																	

		2008															
		May				June	July	August	September				October				
		5-9	12-16	19-23	26-30				1-5	8-12	15-19	22-26	29-3	6-10	13-17	20-24	27-31
Edits of draft Fire Management Plan																	
Final Fire Management Plan Review and Approval																	

		2008/2009															
		November			December		January		February			March		April		May	
EA Notice of completion																	
EBR Policy Decision																	
Develop draft Fire Operations Plan																	
Review and edit draft Fire Operations Plan																	
Approval and distribution of Final Fire Operations Plan																	

Public Consultation

Fire management planning in provincial parks requires that the project (e.g. prescribed fire) be screened out using an approved planning process. This process is the *Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves (Class EA)*. Public consultation will meet the Class EA requirements when the project(s) (e.g. prescribed fire, prescribed burning, fire response) is screened out. Also, fire management plans are considered to provide policy direction and as such, require posting to Ontario's Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) to notify stakeholders that may be interested.

Consultation will consist of advertisements in each of the following newspapers: the Thunder Bay Chronicle Journal, Atikokan Progress and Fort Frances Times to notify the public of the park's intent regarding fire management and a mail out to Quetico Park stakeholders.

The First Nations community of Lac La Croix may be impacted by fire management activities within Quetico Park. As such, effort will be made to communicate with these partners. A meeting with the Lac La Croix community will be arranged to ensure this first nations partner is made aware of the intended fire management direction for Quetico Provincial Park and be given the opportunity to have input in the new fire management plan.

Staffing and Budget Requirements

The Operations Specialist 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 Assistant Park Superintendent will be responsible for answering public inquiries, providing logistical support, assisting in the collection of information and liaison with the Fort Frances Fire Management Headquarters and Dryden Regional Fire Centre. 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.

Terms of Reference Approval

The Quetico Park Fire Management Plan Terms of Reference will be approved by the Northwest Zone Manager for Ontario Parks and the Fire Management Program Manager for the West Fire Region.

Copies of the approved *Terms of Reference for Quetico Provincial Park Fire Management Plan* will be provided to the planning team, its advisors, the Fort Frances Fire Management Headquarters, the Fort Frances District Manager, the Ontario Parks Northwest Zone Office, and the Quetico Park Superintendent.