

Quetico Park Management Options Comment Sheet

Your responses to the management options and any other comments you have will be carefully considered in the preparation of the Preliminary Park Management Plan for Quetico Provincial Park.

Please return this comment sheet to:

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For your comments to be considered, they must be submitted by Oct. 15, 2010.

Under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (1987), personal information will remain confidential unless prior consent is obtained. However, the information may be used by the Ministry of Natural Resources/Ontario Parks to seek public input on other resource management surveys and projects. For further information regarding this Act, please contact Rachel Hill in Fort Frances District at (807) 274-8605.

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Email address: _____

Mailing address: _____

Please indicate if you represent a group or agency: _____

Your interest in Quetico Park: _____

Refer to the Management Options document and maps for full discussion of the topics presented below. For each topic, please indicate your preferred option and add any additional comments you have in the space provided.

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TOPIC 1. East Side Access to the Park

Management direction is required to provide and control public access on the east side of the park. See Figure 4 for access options.

- OPTION 1:** No new access is created on the eastern boundary of the park. Aircraft may continue to land on Clay Lake, or Mack Lake during periods of low water as permitted by the park superintendent. This is the status quo option.
- OPTION 2:** No new access is created on the eastern boundary of the park. The Mack Lake entry location will be changed to Cullen Lake via the portage from Ross Lake (most recently maintained in 2008). Aircraft will not be permitted to land on Mack Lake but will land instead outside of the park on Ross Lake. Mack Lake aircraft landing will be removed from regulation.
- OPTION 3:** New access is created on the eastern boundary of the park. The Mack Lake entry location will be changed to the Wawaig River. New road access will be created at the Wawaig River from existing logging roads (upon agreement with the Sustainable Forest License holder regarding road liability/maintenance). Based upon preliminary discussion with the Sustainable Forest License holder use and access to the road should not pose a problem. The access point will include a parking lot and a portage located outside of the park. Mack Lake aircraft landing will be removed from regulation. The remote access designation would not be changed. This is the preferred option.

Comments:

TOPIC 2. Aircraft Landing

Management direction is required to control aircraft landing access to the park and determine on which lakes aircraft would be allowed. Seasonal restrictions may be warranted.

- OPTION 1:** Commercial aircraft may land by permit for recreation purposes only on the following bodies of water (open or frozen): Beaverhouse Lake, Basswood Lake (King Point), and Mack Lake. Commercial aircraft carrying Canadian residents holding a Canadian resident permit only may land by permit for recreation purposes only on Saganaga Lake (Cache Bay). Private or commercial aircraft may also land by permit for access only to private properties and tenured land on lakes not included in the preceding list. This would formalize the fly-in trial periods on Cache Bay and King Point. This is the status quo option.
- OPTION 2:** Commercial aircraft landing on Beaverhouse Lake will no longer be permitted. The other commercial aircraft landings as described above in option 1 (Basswood Lake, Mack Lake and Saganaga Lake (Cache Bay)) will continue to be permitted. Aircraft may land on lakes (open or frozen) by permit for access to private properties and tenured land only.

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- OPTION 3A:** Commercial aircraft landing on Beaverhouse Lake and Mack Lake will no longer be permitted by anyone, except for park management purposes or to provide emergency services. The other commercial aircraft landings as described above in Option 1 (Basswood Lake and Saganaga Lake (Cache Bay)) will continue to be permitted. Aircraft may land on lakes (open or frozen) by permit for access to private properties and tenured land only.
- OPTION 3B:** This option is the same as 3A except, landing would be permitted only by Canadian residents and Canadian outfitters/independents, subject to a change in regulation (O. reg. 346/07 Mechanized Travel in Wilderness Parks). Aircraft may land on lakes (open or frozen) by permit for access to private properties and tenured land only. This is the preferred option.
- OPTION 4:** All commercial aircraft landings in the park will no longer be permitted (Beaverhouse Lake, Mack Lake, Basswood Lake and Cache Bay). Aircraft may land on lakes (open or frozen) by permit for access to private properties and tenured land only.

Comments:

TOPIC 3. Threshold Wilderness Zone (W3) Boundary and Associated Activities

Management direction is required to delineate the threshold wilderness zone boundary and to determine appropriate activities and any associated development to facilitate new/expanded activities in this wilderness zone. See Figure 5 for threshold wilderness zone size options.

- OPTION 1:** The zone will encompass the shoreline of French Lake and the waters of French Lake (excluding the Dawson Trail campground and French Lake access zone) to a distance of 60m from the shore, extending east to the north bank of the French River, extending west to the Pines on Pickerel Lake from Baptism Creek, and south from the Pines to Sawmill Lake on a southeasterly bearing of **63°** as shown in Figure 5. The size of the zone will be set at 1993 hectares. This represents less than 1% (**0.40%**) of the total area of the park. This is the preferred option.
- OPTION 2:** The zone will encompass the shoreline of French Lake and the waters of French Lake (excluding the Dawson Trail campground and French Lake access zone) to the northern park boundary, and extending east along this boundary to the north bank of the French River, and south to the intersection of the French River and Baptism Creek, and west to the outlet of the Pickerel River into Pickerel Lake, as shown in Figure 5. The size of the W3 zone will be set at 2011 hectares. This represents less than 1% (**0.40%**) of the total area of the park.
- OPTION 3:** The zone will encompass the shoreline of French Lake and the waters of French Lake (excluding the Dawson Trail campground and French Lake access zone) to a distance of 60m from the shore and extending east to the north bank of the French River, and south to the east bank of Baptism Creek, as shown in Figure 5. The size of the zone will be set at 920 hectares. This represents less than 1% (**0.18%**) of the total area of the park.

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Comments:

TOPIC 4. Dawson Trail Campground Vision

Management direction is needed in defining the long term vision and associated development for Dawson Trail campground. Some of the impacts to be considered are carrying capacity of the site, noise levels, fire restrictions, and damage to vegetation (soil compaction, cutting of trees).

- OPTION 1:** The Dawson Trail campground area will be managed in keeping with the character of Quetico, which may include non-mechanized recreation such as natural heritage education, hiking, cross-country skiing, skijoring (skiing while pulled by a dog), mountain biking (in designated areas), as well as providing staging for day trips and short overnight trips into the interior. A limited number of sites may have electrical hook-ups added up to a maximum 40% of sites, or be enlarged or merged to accommodate larger (over 32') recreational camping units (RVs) and the associated spur/back-in/pull-through areas, as demand warrants. This is the status quo option.

- OPTION 2:** The Dawson Trail campground area will be managed in keeping with the character of Quetico, which may include non-mechanized recreation such as natural heritage education, hiking, cross-country skiing, skijoring (skiing while pulled by a dog), mountain biking (in designated areas), as well as providing staging for day trips and short overnight trips into the interior. The existing 107 camp sites within the Dawson Trail campground will be maintained. No additional campsites will be created, enlarged or electrified. Dawson Trail Campground will continue to be managed as described above in option 1. Dawson Trail campground will not emphasize development to accommodate the very large recreational camping units (RVs).

- OPTION 3:** The Dawson Trail campground area will be managed in keeping with the character of Quetico, which may include non-mechanized recreation such as natural heritage education, hiking, cross-country skiing, skijoring (skiing while pulled by a dog), mountain biking (in designated areas), as well as providing staging for day trips and short overnight trips into the interior. The number of campsites within the Dawson Trail campground may be increased by a maximum of 20 sites (to a maximum of 127 sites) as need/demand warrants; some of these new campsites may be created for walk-in camp sites, canvas tents, or yurts. A limited number of these new sites may be created to accommodate larger (over 32') recreational camping units (RVs) and the associated spur/back-in/pull-through areas, as demand warrants. A limited number of sites may have electrical hook-ups added up to a maximum 40% of sites, as need/demand warrants. Dawson Trail Campground will continue to be managed as described above in option 1. A group campsite may be developed as demand warrants. This is the preferred option.

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Comments:

TOPIC 5. Mechanized Ski Trail Grooming

Management direction for mechanized grooming of single-track trails for front-country classic style skiing in the proposed threshold wilderness zone in and around French Lake needs to be determined.

- OPTION 1** Mechanized trail grooming (dragging and track-setting) will occur within the present footprint of cross-country ski trails as presented previously in **Topic 3, Option 1**. This would include the trails within the Dawson Trail campground as well as The Pines, Sawmill Lake and French River Trails. This is the preferred option.
- OPTION 2:** Mechanized trail grooming (dragging and track-setting) is limited to existing cross-country ski trails within the access zone as presented previously in **Topic 3, Option 3**. This would follow the trails within the Dawson Trail campground and would include the French River Trail.
- OPTION 3:** Mechanized trail grooming (dragging and track-setting) is limited to the campground roads.

Comments:

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TOPIC 6. Long-distance Backcountry Trail Development

Management direction is needed to determine if development of long-distance trails (e.g. for back-country hiking and skiing) is consistent with Quetico's objectives (see Figure 6).

- OPTION 1:** No long distance trail development is permitted.
- OPTION 2:** Long distance trail development (maximum tread width 1.5 – 2 meters) is only permitted on the network of abandoned logging roads (many of which have grown in) suited to hiking in the NE corner of the park (those previously used as hiking trails).
- OPTION 3:** New long distance trail development (maximum tread width 1.5 – 2 meters) is permitted anywhere in park where it is appropriate and does not conflict with other park uses, but the focus will be on trail development in the NE corner of the park on elevated terrain. This is the status quo and preferred option.

Comments:

TOPIC 7. Commercial Dog sledding

Management direction is required to determine if commercial dog sledding is an appropriate activity for Quetico.

- OPTION 1:** Commercial dog sledding will not be permitted anywhere in the park. No private large dog team (i.e. more than 1-2 dogs) will be permitted in the park.
- OPTION 2:** Commercially outfitted dog sledding will be permitted in the French Lake access zone only **after** a five-year trial period to assess the impacts to the park's resource base and benefits to the local economy. **
- OPTION 3:** Commercially outfitted dog sledding may be permitted in the French Lake access and adjacent threshold wilderness zone **after** a five-year trial period to assess the impacts to the park's resource base and benefits to the local economy.** If permitted, a quota for this activity would be implemented. This is the preferred option.

**Dog sled owners/operators/mushers will be required to dispose of dog feces at least 60m from any water source while at campsites and would be required to provide proof of annual vaccination, including vaccination for parvovirus.

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Comments:

TOPIC 8. Designated travel routes and campsites

Management direction is required in order to guide changes to the visitor regulation program respecting traveling on designated routes and camping on designated campsites. Considerations include visitor choice to select locations, impacts of uncontrolled camping and hiking, and ability to locate visitors in emergency situations.

- OPTION 1:** No changes to travel or campsites will be made. Although encouraged to use sites designated by the presence of a primitive stone fireplace, interior visitors may continue to camp in any suitable area/site, in consideration of the prohibition on damage to trees and vegetation. Visitors may continue to travel anywhere in the park that is not closed to travel, (in other words go anywhere and camp anywhere). This is the status quo option.
- OPTION 2:** Interior visitors must camp on a designated campsite, identified by the presence of a primitive stone fireplace and eventually by the site's inclusion of the Quetico Park canoeing map. Quetico Park is not considering the use of signage to designate sites.
 - OPTION 2A:** Visitors may continue to travel anywhere in the park that is not closed to travel, (in other words camp on a designated site but day trip only off of established travel routes). This is the preferred option.
 - OPTION 2B:** Visitors may only travel and camp on established travel routes, identified by existing park-maintained portages and trails and campsites designated as described above (in other words camp only on designated sites and travel only on established travel routes).

Comments:

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TOPIC 9. Pickerel Lake Dam

There is a need to review current management direction to determine appropriate policy for maintaining the Pickerel Lake dam.

- Option 1:** Quetico staff will continue to work with the Northwest Region MNR to monitor the condition of the Pickerel Lake dam and to undertake remedial actions (such as repair or stoplog replacement) to prevent dam failure and to maintain the present water levels. Subject to available resources should extensive repair or replacement of the existing structure be required, the creation of a spillway or weir type dam will be considered. This is the status quo option.

- Option 2:** Quetico Provincial Park will continue to work with the Northwest Region MNR to monitor the condition of the Pickerel Lake dam. Though the actual impacts of the dam's deterioration are somewhat speculative, we should be able to safely predict the outcome of the lake system's eventual return to historic levels. Currently, a study is being undertaken that will provide a more precise idea as to the effects on the lake that a change in water levels will have. As water levels drop, implications for day-use beaches and ease of canoe travel will be assessed; if necessary remedial restoration will be done to maintain/restore a minimum water level, subject to available resources. This is the preferred option.

Comments:

Thank you for providing your comments!

Please provide any additional comments for our consideration below: