



Six Mile Lake

Preliminary Park Management Plan



Ontario

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Preliminary Park Management Plan

MNR 51909

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**Park Superintendent
Six Mile Lake Provincial Park
Box 340
2024 Joe King Road
Coldwater, ON
L0K 1E0**

Dear Sir/Madam:

Ontario Parks is presently undertaking a management plan review for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. As part of the planning process I am pleased to present the *Six Mile Lake Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan*.

The preliminary plan contains proposed policies relating to resource stewardship, operations and development that will guide the management of Six Mile Lake Provincial Park over the next 20-year period. After careful consideration of the background information collected and review of comments received, this document represents Ontario Parks' preferred policy for the park.

You are invited to review and comment on the preliminary management plan. As part of this stage in the planning process, a public information centre is to be held on September 25, 2004 from 10am – 4pm at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park to allow interested individuals and parties the opportunity to inspect the plan, view maps and discuss issues with members of the planning team. All comments regarding the preliminary management plan should be submitted by November 8, 2004 to the attention of:

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Information is being collected as part of the management planning process for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. All input received will become part of the public record for this planning process, unless privacy is requested, pursuant to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Your participation in this public consultation process is encouraged. All written comments will be carefully considered during preparation of the final management plan.

Yours truly,



Adair Ireland-Smith
Managing Director
Ontario Parks

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STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

The Ministry of Natural Resources' Statement of Environmental Values (SEV) was prepared in accordance with the *Environmental Bill of Rights* (EBR). It describes how the purposes of the EBR are to be considered whenever decisions are made which might significantly affect the environment.

The primary purpose of the EBR is *to protect, conserve and, where reasonable, restore the integrity of the environment*. From the Ministry's perspective, that broad statement of purpose translates into four objectives in its SEV:

- To ensure the long-term health of ecosystems by protecting and conserving our valuable soil, aquatic resources, forest and wildlife resources as well as their biological foundations;
- To ensure the continuing availability of natural resources for the long-term benefit of the people of Ontario;
- To protect natural heritage and biological features of provincial significance; and
- To protect human life, the resource base and physical property from the threats of forest fires, floods and erosion.

The Ministry's SEV has been considered during the preparation of this preliminary management plan. The *Six Mile Lake Provincial Park Management Plan* is intended to reflect the direction set in the SEV and to further the objectives of managing Ontario's resources on an ecologically sustainable basis.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is located immediately east of Highway 400 on the north-west shore of Six Mile Lake in the Township of Georgian Bay, District of Muskoka. The park sits approximately 150 km north of Toronto (Figures 1 and 2). The recreation class park was regulated under the *Provincial Parks Act* in 1958, but was expanded in 2004 to its present size of 212 ha. Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is a popular destination, receiving over 65,000 visitors in 2002. The park offers opportunities for camping, fishing, swimming and hiking. It also provides boat access to Six Mile Lake and serves as a starting point for the Gibson-MacDonald canoe route.

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park also protects important earth and life science features. The park falls within Ecodistrict 5E-7 and the area of the Great Lakes Heritage Coast. Sitting on the southern edge of the Precambrian Shield within the central gneiss belt of the Grenville Province, the park was once submerged beneath the Wisconsin ice sheet. The varied topography that has resulted from glaciation has produced a diversity of communities that are representative of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest Region, including rock barrens, mature mesic hardwood forests and wetlands. Several regionally and provincially rare plant species are found within these communities. A number of rare reptile species have also been documented in the park.

2.0 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

2.1 Snowmobiling

Since 1999, snowmobiles have been allowed to travel through the park along the main roadway to provide access to the existing Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Club (OFSC) Trans-Provincial Trail System (TOPS) trail to the north and south of the park. This is a key trail in the OFSC system, representing the main route along the Highway 400 and 69 corridor between Orillia and Parry Sound.

This temporary route through the park was permitted while the OFSC looked at alternatives for establishing a permanent north-south link and to address issues related to unauthorized snowmobile use in the park. Travel through the park was authorized according to a memorandum of understanding that was subject to annual review and contingent upon on-going agreement over operations, logistics and the resolution of concerns as they arise. The search for a new section of trail in the Six Mile Lake area was part of a larger effort the OFSC is engaged in to improve rider safety by relocating trails off water bodies and traveled public roadways.

Due to a number of factors, including the expansion of Highway 400 and the presence of numerous water bodies in the area, the OFSC's efforts to identify a suitable route outside of the provincial park were unsuccessful. Recognizing the importance of this north-south corridor, that snowmobiling is a permitted use in development and natural environment zones in recreation class parks, and the success that the temporary route had in addressing previously uncontrolled snowmobile use, Ontario Parks agreed to establish a permanent trail through Six Mile Lake Provincial Park (Section 10.3).

3.0 CLASSIFICATION

Ontario's provincial parks are organized into six broad categories which define an individual park's contributions to the park system.

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is a recreation class park. Recreation parks are intended to support a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities for large numbers of people in attractive surroundings.

This classification has been assigned to the park in recognition of the variety and quality of recreation opportunities it provides, and its location in close proximity to population centres in central and southern Ontario.



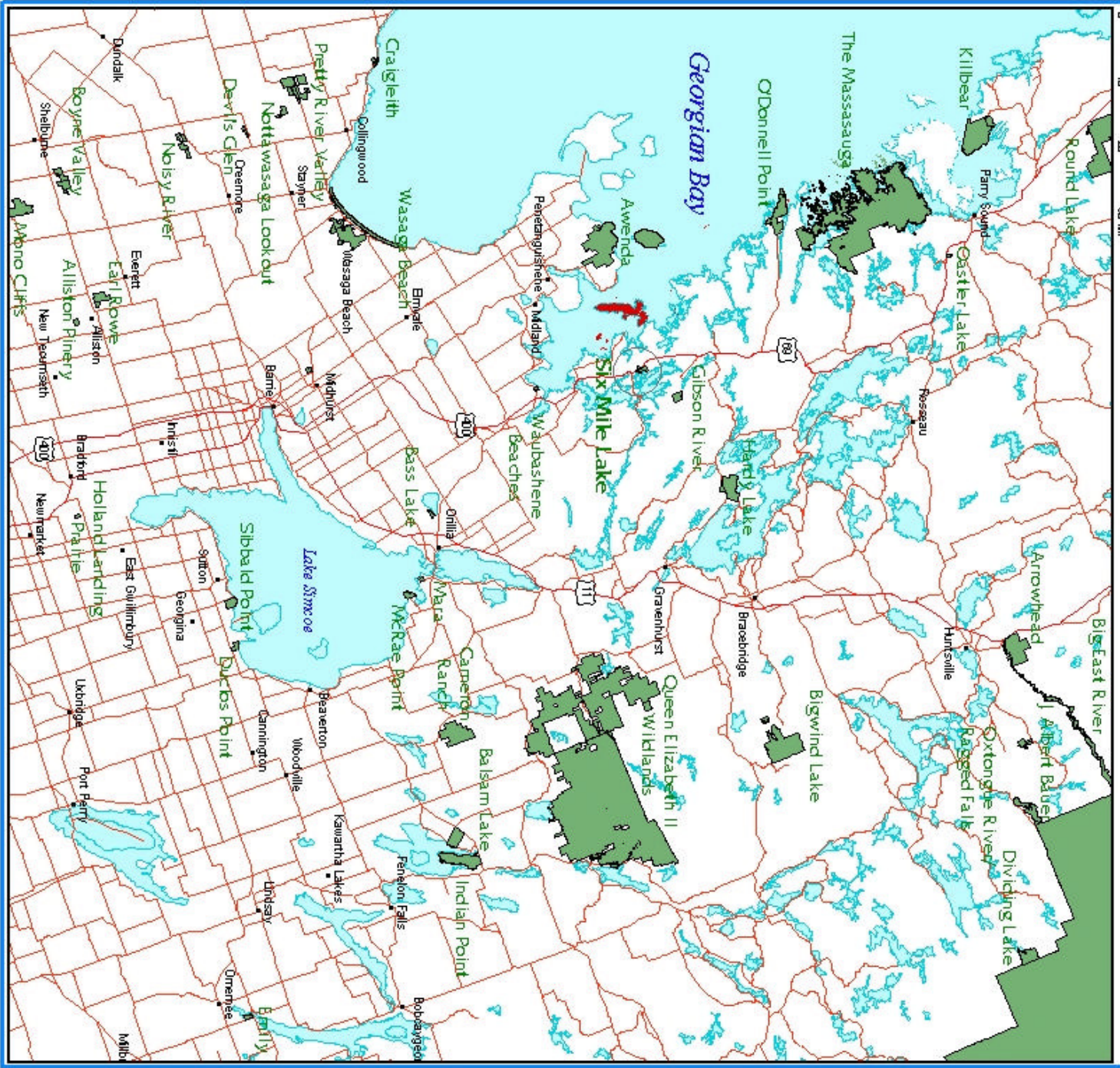
Six Mile Lake

- Legend**
- City, Town, Village
 - Major Highway
 - Highway
 - Lake
 - Provincial Park
 - National Park



Ontario

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 This map is illustrative only. It is not intended to be a precise indicator of location, boundaries or features, nor are quality measurements.
 Prepared with GIS and Arc 10
 Data: Neil American Datum 1983
 Base Derived from 1995
 Produced by: Osa & Park, Canada Centre



4.0 GOAL

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park will:

Provide a variety of recreational and educational opportunities in attractive surroundings, while protecting the park's important earth and life science features.

In fulfilling this goal, the park contributes to the achievement of recreation and protection targets for the provincial park system.

5.0 OBJECTIVES

Management of individual parks is guided by the four objectives of the provincial park system – *protection, recreation, heritage appreciation and tourism*. Six Mile Lake Provincial Park contributes to the achievement of each of these objectives.

5.1 Protection

To protect the significant elements of the natural and cultural landscape of Six Mile Lake Provincial Park.

The park sits within the Central Gneiss Belt of the Grenville Province. The exposed Precambrian bedrock outcrops which characterize the park's gently rolling landscape were glacially smoothed and scoured during the late Wisconsinan period. Depressions in the bedrock surface are filled with shallow layers of till and glaciolacustrine sediments derived from the period when the area was submerged below glacial Lake Algonquin some 12,000 years before present (B.P.). Glaciation also created a number of basins, where deeper organic soil deposits and wetland areas have formed. The park's earth science features are locally significant.

The geology of the region has given rise to a variety of community types and species within the park that are representative of the broken bedrock uplands, transition forests and wetlands found throughout Ecodistrict 5E-7. Open rock barrens support communities of lichens and

mosses, grasses, thickets of juniper, sumac and cherry, along with young hardwood forest species such as white oak (*Quercus alba*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*). Areas with deeper soils are covered with older red oak (*Quercus rubra*) and red maple hardwood forest. Mixedwood forest communities occur on shallow to deeper soils and are comprised of white pine (*Pinus strobus*), white birch (*Betula papyrifera*), red oak and largetooth aspen (*Populus grandidentata*).

Wetland areas include marsh, open water, and bog and fen complexes. These support a wide variety of shrubs, grasses, sedges, sphagnum species, and herbaceous aquatic vegetation. A number of species identified in the park are significant at the regional or provincial level. Provincially significant species such as Carolina yellow-eyed-grass (*Xyris difformis*) and Carey's smartweed (*Polygonum careyi*) have Atlantic coastal plain affinities.

These communities provide important habitat for a variety of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. A small number of species at risk have been documented in the park. The park's significant species, shallow soils, and wetlands, are sensitive to disturbance and will be protected through appropriate zoning.

5.2 Recreation

To provide visitors with opportunities for camping and land and water based recreation.

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is primarily a vacation destination for family camping. The park provides campers and day-visitors with opportunities for hiking, swimming, picnicking, fishing and boating. It also serves as an access point for the 56 km Gibson-MacDonald canoe route and the 2,039 ha McCrae Lake Conservation Reserve.

Although closed during the winter season, the park does receive limited use for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Snowmobiling along a designated trail is also permitted (Section 9.2).

Facilities supporting these recreational uses include three beaches, boat launch and docking areas, canoe rentals, picnic shelter and hiking trail (Figure 2). The park offers 217 campsites, including 53 hydro and 9 walk-in sites.

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park received over 65,000 visitors in 2002, comprising of approximately 7,500 day visitors and 57,500 camper nights. The average length of stay for campers between 1992 and 2002 was consistently 2.9 nights, but reached 3.8 nights in 2002. The July//August occupancy rate over the same period averaged just over 74%.

Zoning and recreation management policies will be used to control activities in order to not adversely affect the park's sensitive natural features.

5.3 Heritage Appreciation

To provide opportunities for exploration and appreciation of the park's natural and cultural heritage.

Based on the region's natural features and history, a number of interpretive themes have been identified for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. These include the ecology of the Canadian Shield, species at risk, and settlement history of the Six Mile Lake area. Both structured and unstructured opportunities will be provided to allow park visitors to explore these themes (Section 9.1).

5.4 Tourism

To provide Ontario residents and non-resident visitors with opportunities to discover and experience the distinct natural and recreational features of the park and surrounding region.

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is primarily a vacation destination for campers from southern and central Ontario. However, the park does receive visitors from other provinces, the United States and overseas. It also provides easy access to numerous other attractions in the Muskoka and Huronia regions, and serves as a stopover destination for some visitors.

In 2000, the average camping group spent close to \$260 on transportation, food, entertainment, etc. in association with their trip. Just over 40% of this amount, or approximately \$100, was spent within 40 km of the park. In total, visitors' expenditures amounted to approximately \$1.5 million. Visitor spending combined with park operating and capital expenditures have an economic impact on the provincial economy. In 2000, the total spending at the park supported a value of \$2.5 million and 48 person years of employment.

6.0 BOUNDARY

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park was originally regulated under the *Provincial Parks Act* in 1958, and is currently described in Ontario Regulation 178/04. The area of the park is 212 ha (Figure 2).

7.0 ZONING

Within the context of a park's classification, zoning is used to delineate areas based on their resource significance and recreation potential. Provincial park policy defines six zone types – *development, access, nature reserve, wilderness, natural environment* and *historical*. Zoning provides an important tool for identifying and distinguishing management requirements for the various features of a park. It is used to ensure that a park's stated goal and objectives are met.

With the exception of wilderness zones, recreation class parks may contain all zone types. Two zoning classifications are used at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park, development and natural environment (Figure 3).

7.1 Development Zone

Development zones typically contain the facilities and services required to support park operations and activities associated with intensive day-use and camping. These zones are

intended to accommodate large numbers of people and a wide range of uses.

The 46 ha development zone at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park contains the park office, park roads, maintenance and storage yards, park store, shower facilities, beaches, boat launch and docking areas, interpretive centre, parking areas, campgrounds and part of the snowmobile trail. This zone also contains the approximately 10 ha of lakebed that is contained within the park boundary. Future intensive facility development will be restricted to this zone. New facilities identified for this zone include a campground comfort station and park water treatment system.

7.2 Natural Environment Zones

Natural environment zones are used to delineate natural landscapes where important features are protected and limited development may be permitted to support low-intensity recreational use. Three distinct natural environment zones have been defined for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. Management of each zone will generally involve a ‘hands-off’ approach, allowing natural processes to function.

Natural environment zone 1 (NE1) is located in the north end of the park. At 144 ha, it is the largest zone in the park, and will protect important wetland, rock barren and forest communities. These communities support a number of regionally and provincially significant plant species, and provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife.

Limited development to support recreational use will be permitted. NE1 includes an existing interpretive hiking trail. A new trail will be developed to provide additional hiking and interpretation opportunities. NE1 will also accommodate the establishment of a permanent snowmobile trail (Section 2.2).

Natural environment zone 2 (NE2) is located in the southeast corner of the park. This 14 ha area protects a large, relatively undisturbed shrub wetland, representing one of the most significant natural areas in the park. No development for this zone is proposed at this time.

Natural environment zone 3 (NE3) is a 8 ha parcel of land that sits west of Highway 400 on Baxter Lake. This zone protects open rock barrens and hardwood forest, and is considered locally significant in Ecodistrict 5E-7. No development is proposed for this zone at this time.

8.0 RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP POLICIES

The natural features of Six Mile Lake Provincial Park are generally considered to be of regional or local significance. However, the park does contain a number of provincially significant plant species. Records and evidence also exists for the presence of five reptiles within the park that are designated as species at risk. The park’s resources will be managed according to the general policies defined for recreation class parks in the *Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies (1992)* and the direction contained in the *Ontario’s Living Legacy Land Use Strategy (1999)*. Supplementary policy direction is provided in the following sections.

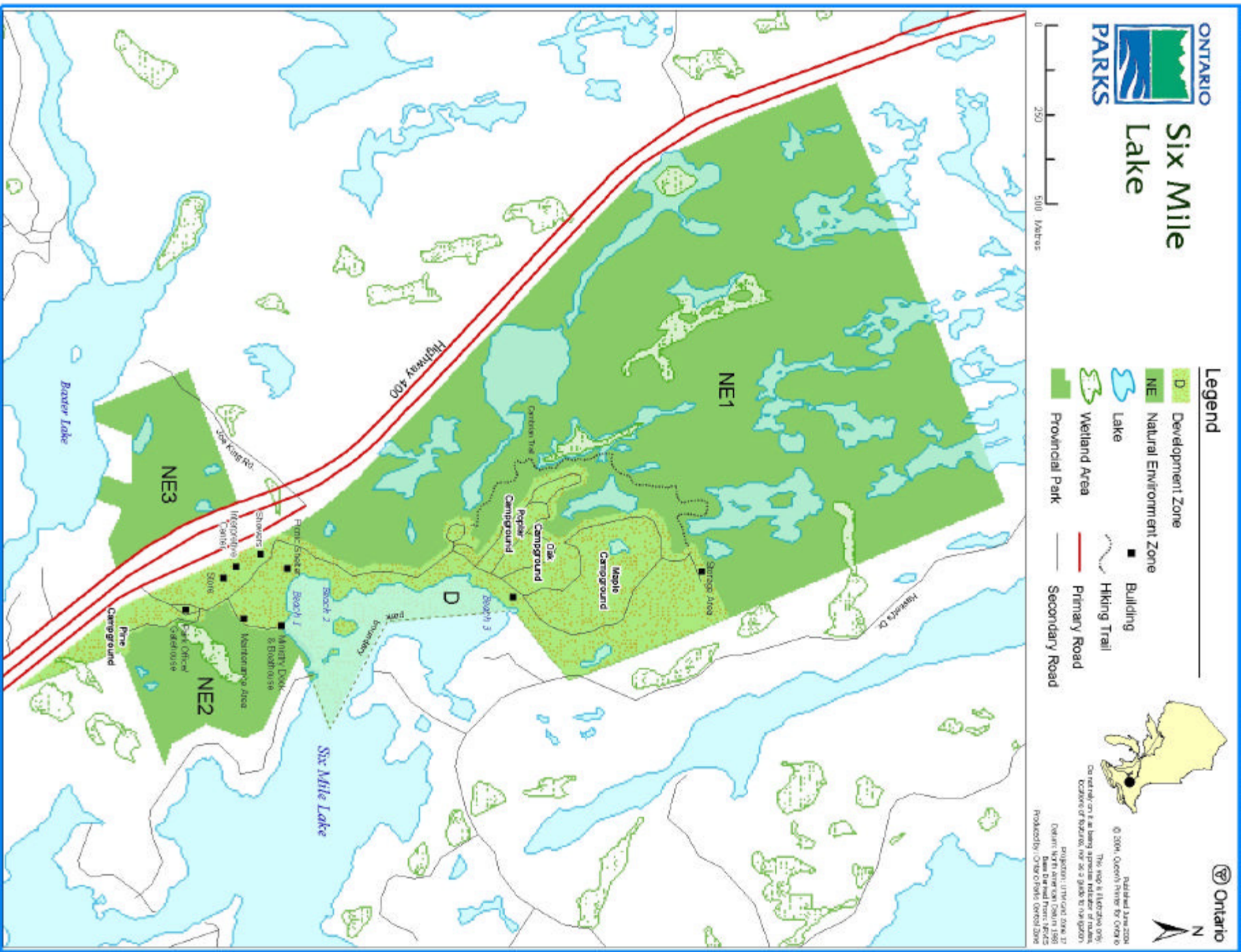
8.1 Land Management

The rock barrens found throughout the park support shallow soils and communities of lichens and mosses, both of which are very sensitive to disturbance. Exposed rock ridges also present a constraint to some forms of development. These features will be avoided to the extent possible in any future facility development projects.

The park also contains a variety of wetland communities which are equally sensitive to development and pedestrian traffic. Disturbance of these fragile areas from facility development will not be permitted. Wetland areas may, however, be featured as part of the proposed hiking trail (Section 10.3). Environmentally sensitive design features and construction, such as boardwalks, will be used as appropriate.

FIGURE 3

PROPOSED ZONING



Aquatic growth in the beach areas may be controlled according to applicable provincial policies and regulations.

8.2 Water Management

The water quality of Six Mile Lake in the beach areas will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure human health and safety. Where required by provincial regulations, beaches will be closed until quality measures return to acceptable standards for recreational use. Should water quality become a persistent problem, appropriate actions will be taken to identify and correct the contributing factor(s).

8.3 Fisheries Management

Fishing in Ontario is regulated by the federal *Fisheries Act* and provincial *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*. These regulations apply to Six Mile Lake, including the portion which falls within park boundaries. Boat launch and docking facilities are provided at the park to support sport fishing on Six Mile Lake. The park will also provide anglers with information on regulations, conservation, exotic species, and safe fishing and boating practices, when available. However, regulations will be enforced by Conservation Officers who regularly launch patrols from the park.

There is one existing baitfish harvesting license which applies to Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. In keeping with the direction provided in the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy*, this license may continue, but new operations will not be permitted. Other commercial fishing is prohibited at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park.

8.4 Wildlife Management

Sport hunting and commercial trapping are not permitted at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. On occasion, the presence or behaviour of animals may conflict with park management objectives. The control of nuisance animals will be carried out as required and according to provincial policies and regulations.

Species inventories and research will be encouraged and pursued as opportunities arise

and funds permit. In particular, more detailed amphibian and reptile inventories may be completed to verify the presence of species at risk within the park.

8.5 Vegetation Management

Management of the park's vegetation communities will generally involve a 'hands-off' approach, allowing natural processes and succession to proceed unhindered. Sensitive communities will be protected from development and human traffic. Routine maintenance, including the removal of hazard trees and brushing of trails and roadways will be permitted. Control of invasive species may also occur.

Insect and disease infestations which threaten the park's vegetation communities may also be controlled in accordance with provincial policies.

In the development zone, planting of appropriate native species as part of minor rehabilitation efforts around campsites and park facilities will be permitted. Aquatic growth may be controlled in the beach areas in accordance with the park operating plan.

Large scale efforts to control non-native and invasive species, or rehabilitate or alter vegetation communities will require the preparation of a detailed vegetation management plan. Further inventory and study will be encouraged and pursued as opportunities arise and funds permit, especially relating to the park's aquatic communities, mosses and lichens.

8.6 Fire Management

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is located in the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Fire Management Zone under the *Forest Fire Management Strategy for Ontario* (2004).

Given the capital investment in facilities within the park, and the degree of private development adjacent to the park, fires in all zones will be suppressed.

Fire management objectives for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park are to prevent loss of life, personal injury and socio-economic disruption; to minimize loss or damage to park property and infrastructure; and to allow natural processes to proceed when possible.

Fire response will be conducted in accordance with the *Forest Fire Management Strategy for Ontario*. Fires that threaten park visitor safety or park infrastructure will receive full response and sustained action until extinguished. Other fires may be considered for modified response, in consultation between the park superintendent and the fire executive officer.

Response for structural fires and forest fires is guided by a municipal forest fire management agreement between the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Township of Georgian Bay.

Fire response activities will be conducted in a manner that minimizes ecological damage whenever feasible. This can occur through the use of “light on the land” techniques, which do not unduly disturb the landscape, whenever feasible.

Depending on the fire hazard, restrictions on open fires may be implemented by the park superintendent in consultation with the local MNR fire office and the township fire chief.

The use of fire through prescribed burning may be considered to achieve ecological or hazard reduction objectives. Plans for any prescribed burns will be developed in accordance with the *Prescribed Burn Planning Manual* (1997), and applicable policies and legislation.

8.7 Cultural Resources

A cultural resources inventory for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park will be completed as funds become available. In the interim, cultural study of the park and surrounding area by qualified groups and individuals will be encouraged. Site-specific study will be completed prior to any future development involving significant ground disturbance.

9.0 OPERATIONS POLICIES

A park operating plan will be prepared to provide park staff with the necessary information required to operate the park on a day-to-day basis. In addition to addressing the operations policies described below, the plan will include such topics as budgeting, staffing, maintenance, fire response, enforcement and emergency services. The plan will be consistent with the approved *Ontario Provincial Parks Operating Standards*, and will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

9.1 Natural Heritage Education

The Natural Heritage Education (NHE) program at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park will provide visitors with opportunities to learn about and interact with the natural environment through interpretation and recreation. A Natural Heritage Education Plan outlining interpretive programming for the park may be prepared. The NHE program will be reviewed on an annual basis.

The park presently offers a seasonal level of NHE service, with an emphasis on self-use facilities such as trails and personal contact through the interpretive centre and structured programs. The three components of NHE include information, interpretation and recreation.

9.1.1 Information

Information concerning the park, facilities and services, and points of interest in the greater region will be provided to park visitors. A variety of media will be used to convey this information, including the annual park information guide, signs, bulletin boards and displays, and personal contact. Information will be available primarily at the park gate house, interpretive centre, and will be provided at locations throughout the park as required.

9.1.2 Interpretation

Interpretive themes identified for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park may include:

- Canadian Shield ecology;
- logging history of Six Mile Lake and Severn River;
- settlement history of Six Mile Lake and Little Go Home Bay;
- art in the park – life and work of David Milne;
- outdoor recreation – canoeing and kayaking; and
- species at risk and their habitat.

Messages developed around these themes will be conveyed to park visitors through publications, the interpretive centre, structured programs, and the self-guided *The Living Edge* interpretive trail.

9.1.3 Recreation

The NHE program does not provide structured opportunities for visitors to develop their recreational skills. However, the park does support and encourage a variety of recreational activities, through the provision of a hiking trail, boating facilities, fishing equipment, and canoe rentals.

9.2 Recreation Management

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park received approximately 65,000 visitors in 2002. Most of these were vacationing campers from southern or central Ontario. Visitor surveys suggest that the main activities participated in are swimming, fishing, hiking, casual play and nature appreciation.

While these activities are generally non-intrusive, any activity found to have significant adverse effects on the park's natural features will be controlled. Appropriate actions might include temporary or complete suspension of an activity, spatial relocation, mitigation and rehabilitation.

Campsites will be monitored for erosion and degradation, and may be temporarily closed for rehabilitation as required. Campsite closures and rehabilitation will comply with Ontario Park's standards and guidelines governing capital development.

The hiking trail will be similarly monitored, and sections may be temporarily closed to prevent erosion, trampling, rutting and widening. A new trail will be developed in NE1 to provide visitors with further opportunities for hiking and nature appreciation.

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is closed during the winter season, but does support limited informal winter use for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Snowmobile use along a temporary trail was permitted by a memorandum of understanding since 1999. This plan will allow for the establishment of a permanent route (Section 10.3).

Although park staff do not have the authority to enforce fishing or boating regulations, information may be provided to anglers and boaters to promote responsible practices.

All-terrain-vehicles (ATVs) are prohibited in the park.

9.3 Tourism Services

The park store is planned to continue to provide a range of goods and services, including firewood, canoe and fishing equipment rental, and camping and grocery supplies.

9.4 Research

Research by qualified individuals and groups will be encouraged. All research must be approved and conducted in accordance with provincial park policy on research activities in parks and the *Central Zone Research and Information Strategy (2004)*.

Priorities for future projects at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park include more detailed inventories of the park's wetland communities and reptile and amphibian populations. However, research may deal with all aspects of the park's earth and life science resources, cultural resources and history, recreational activities, and visitor groups.

9.5 Marketing

A marketing plan will be prepared for the park and will focus on the following priorities:

- increasing the occupancy rate by encouraging longer stays and promoting shoulder season and mid-week camping; and
- increasing day use throughout the season by attracting visitors off Highway 400 for roadside picnicking and swimming.

These objectives may be addressed by promoting the park's existing and new facilities and services as they are established, its convenient location, and the opportunities available for canoeing, including using the park as a drop-off/pick-up for the Gibson-MacDonald route.

10.0 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

As a recreation class park, a significant level of facility development is required to support park use. While many facilities presently exist, new ones may be required in the future and existing ones may need to be upgraded or replaced. Decisions regarding development will be based on research and information on the park's valued features. Development will be carried out in accordance with approved site plans, utilizing appropriate standards and in conformity with relevant legislation and policy. The following sections identify the facility development projects presently identified for the park.

10.1 Internal Roads

The presence of shallow soils and exposed bedrock in the park makes road maintenance an on-going requirement. Major reconstruction and upgrading of the campground roads is required and will be completed as funds permit.

10.2 Visitor Services

There are currently 29 vault privies and a shower building to serve park visitors (Figure 4). Privy upgrading will be an on-going activity. A

trailer dumping and filling station is located in the south end of the park near the park office. Garbage and recycling are managed in a centrally located collection depot. Maintenance and upgrading of these facilities will be conducted as required.

A new comfort station, lift station and septic bed are to be constructed in the campground area to provide campers with additional sanitary facilities. A new water treatment system will also be developed within the park to comply with Ministry of Environment standards.

10.3 Trails

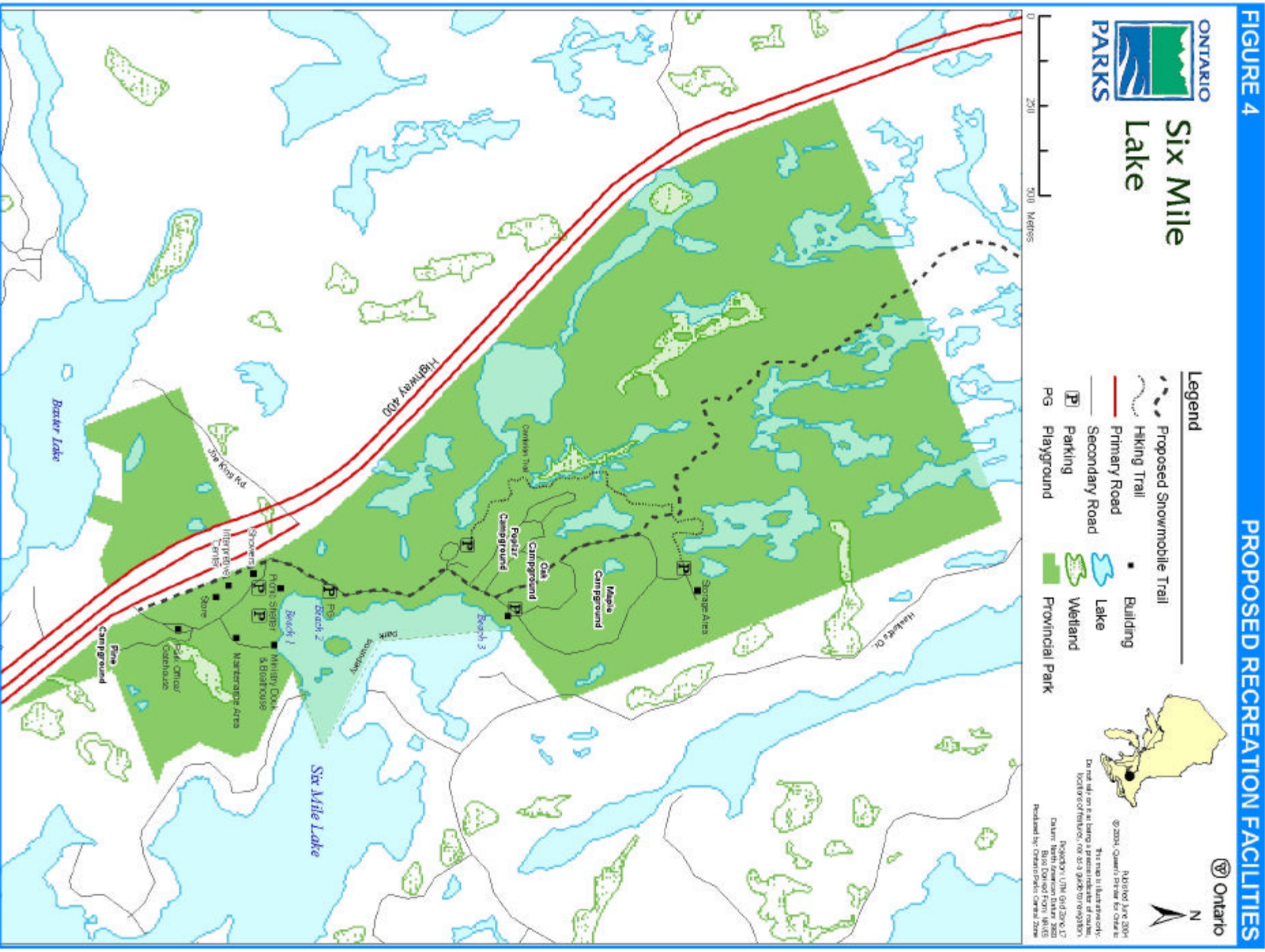
There is an existing 1 km self-use interpretive trail located in the park. A new trail will be developed in NE1 to provide visitors with further opportunities for hiking and nature appreciation.

A snowmobile trail is also to be established through NE1 and the development zone to provide riders with access to the existing OFSC TOPS trail to the north and south of Six Mile Lake Provincial Park (Figure 4). This trail will contribute to the OFSC's efforts to improve rider safety by relocating trails off traveled public roadways. The redundant sections of the temporary trail presently open to riders along the park's main roadway will be closed to snowmobile use upon establishment of the new north-south route. Where appropriate, this trail will form the basis for the new hiking trail to be established in NE1.

As required by the *Environmental Assessment Act*, the proposed snowmobile trail has been screened for its environmental implications. Existing earth and life science inventories suggest that the proposed route will not adversely affect any significant natural features. An additional inspection of the proposed trail undertaken by Ontario Parks in 2004 indicated no specific sensitive features such as rare plants, nesting or denning site that may not have been identified in previous inventories. Further, snowmobile use in natural environment zones within recreation class parks is permitted by provincial park policy. Based on this

FIGURE 4

PROPOSED RECREATION FACILITIES



assessment, it has been determined that the trail can be approved to proceed subject to further site-level investigation.

A final inspection of the proposed route will be undertaken by Ontario Parks staff to identify the presence of specific sensitive features along the proposed route (e.g. rare plant(s), nesting or denning areas, etc.) that may not have been identified in earlier inventories, and that should be avoided prior to establishing the final route location.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The resource stewardship activities and development projects identified in the plan will be implemented according to annual funding allocations and the priorities established by Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. Where required by provincial park policy and the *Environmental Assessment Act*, Ontario Parks will undertake additional evaluation and consultation prior to the implementation of a project. The following list summarizes the main initiatives and activities proposed for the park at this time.

Resource Stewardship

- Completion of more detailed reptile and amphibian inventories
- Further study and inventory of the park's wetland communities
- Completion of a cultural resources inventory.

Facility Development

- Development of a new comfort station in the campground
- Establishment of a new water treatment system for the park
- Upgrading of campground roads
- Upgrading of vault privies
- Development of a new hiking trail in NE1
- Establishment of a snowmobile trail.

Operational

- Preparation of a park operating plan
- Preparation of a marketing plan

- Preparation of a natural heritage education plan.

12.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

An Invitation to Participate was issued in August 2003 to announce the beginning of the management plan review process for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park and to solicit input on the terms of reference. The invitation was sent to adjacent landowners, parties with a known interest in the park and to those on Ontario Parks' mandatory contact list. The management plan review was also announced through newspaper notices in the Orillia Packet and Times and the Midland Free Press, bulletins at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park, and posting on the Environmental Bill of Rights Environmental Registry. A 45-day period was provided to allow interested individuals and parties to submit comments.

Stage 2 of the plan review process involved the compilation of a background information file containing a variety of reports and reference materials describing the park. These materials included earth and life science inventories, visitor statistics and survey data, a map of the proposed snowmobile trail, and Ontario Parks' planning and management policies. Release of the file was announced in December 2003 to those on the mailing list, through notices in the Orillia and Midland newspapers, and posting on the Environmental Bill of Rights Environmental Registry. The file was available for viewing at the offices of the Township of Georgian Bay, Ministry of Natural Resources' Parry Sound District, and Ontario Parks' Central Zone. A 60-day review and comment period was provided.

The release of the preliminary park management plan gives interested individuals and parties the opportunity to review and comment on the management policies and activities being put forward for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. The draft plan has been sent to those on the mailing list. The 45-day review and comment opportunity has also been announced through

newspaper notices and posting on the Environmental Bill of Rights Environmental Registry. Further opportunity to comment and discuss issues will be provided at a public information session to be held during the fall of 2004.

The final stage in the plan review process will involve the preparation of the final management plan based on all available information and careful review of the comments received. Once approved, the public will be provided with a final opportunity to inspect the *Six Mile Lake Provincial Park Management Plan*.

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