

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **ST RAPHAEL SIGNATURE SITE STRATEGY - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

A strategy is being prepared for St Raphael Signature Site to guide the long-term protection and management of resources, values and overall development within the site.

The St. Raphael Signature Site is located approximately 400 km northwest of Thunder Bay and is comprised of the recommended St. Raphael Provincial Park (P2287) and the Miniss Enhanced Management Area (EMA) (E2283a), covering a total of 153,375 hectares. The huge area provides important habitat and calving sites for woodland caribou and nesting grounds for sandhill cranes. St Raphael Provincial Park is a waterway class park, containing circular canoe routes linking Lake St Joseph and the Albany River Systems. The circular canoe routes within the park create three blocks of land that are either surrounded by or adjacent to the park and together these blocks form the Miniss EMA. The primary intent for this EMA is to carry out forest management activities in a manner that will recognize tourism activities consistent with policy.

The purpose of these Terms of Reference is to describe the process and schedule to be used in developing the Strategy for the St Raphael Signature Site and the associated St Raphael Park and Miniss EMA plans.

The immediate planning area of interest for the Signature Site includes the municipalities of Sioux Lookout and Pickle Lake as well as the Ontario based First Nations of Mishkeegogamang and the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen who have close ties to the St. Raphael landbase.

Strategic direction for the St. Raphael Signature Site will initially be developed to establish broad goals and objectives for the planning area and to guide the preparation of a separate Park Management Plan for St. Raphael Provincial Park and separate Resource Management Plan for the Miniss Enhanced Management Area. The Signature Site Strategy will deal with lands and resources within the boundaries of the Signature Site. It will be an umbrella document that establishes overall direction and policy to ensure the integration of activities within the Signature Site.

The Park Management Plan and the Resource Management Plan are separate documents that will implement the intent and direction of the Signature Site Strategy. A third document encompassing direction for economic development and partnering may be prepared, if required.

The Signature Site Strategy will be completed first, with other plans and related documents following shortly thereafter. Co-ordination of the planning processes will foster efficiencies in time and public involvement, and reduce repetition and uncertainty of process.

The Strategy and related plans will be developed utilizing a team approach with a Steering Committee providing overall linkage between planning and corporate direction. A Project Team will lead the development of the strategy and the related management plans with input from various technical support people. An Advisory Committee, supported by a significant public consultation process, will provide advice to the Project Team. The Project Team will also have access to and receive guidance and assistance from various advisors and technical support people.

The development of the Signature Site Strategy and associated plans will be undertaken in 9 stages, as follows:

1. Develop the **Terms of Reference**.
2. Initial **Invitation to Participate** in the development of the Signature Site Strategy, Park Plan and EMA Plan.
3. Preparation of **Background Information** documents and public review. One background document will be prepared for the Strategy, Park Plan and EMA Plan.
4. Preparation of **Issues and Plan Alternatives** document for the Strategy and public review. At this stage the Issues and Alternatives will address the broad strategic level options and alternatives necessary to ensure integration of subsequent park and EMA planning.
5. Preparation and public review of the **Preliminary Signature Site Strategy**. The strategy will detail the chosen alternative including the policies required for implementation. Having now established the broad direction for the Signature Site, the more detailed issues and alternatives for the park and the EMA will also be presented.
6. Release and inspection of the **Approved Signature Site Strategy**.
7. Preparation and public review of the **Preliminary Park Plan and EMA Plan**.
8. Release and inspection of the **Approved Park and EMA Plans**.
9. **Publication** of the final package containing the three.

The 9 major steps towards completing the Strategy, Park Plan and EMA Plan and the anticipated completion dates, along with the public consultation components, are outlined in Table 1.

A key component to sound planning for the future of the St. Raphael Signature Site is public input and involvement. The planning process to develop the Strategy is designed to encourage and incorporate public input, and meet legal requirements. The planning process will also explore opportunities for partners to share in the responsibilities and benefits of park operations, development, management and stewardship. It will involve a wide cross-section of people such as First Nation and community representatives, environmentalists, business people, industry representatives, anglers, hunters, canoeing enthusiasts, and naturalists.

Each stage has its own consultation and communications requirements. However, some basic strategies will be employed throughout the planning process. In all cases, the advice and comments from the public will be forwarded to the Chair(s) of the Advisory Committee for the Committee's consideration. All comments will be documented and where necessary a response prepared. A document repository will be established in the Sioux Lookout District office. Before public release, Field Services Division, Ontario Parks and Communication Services Branch will approve all communications products.

To minimize any language barriers, at a minimum, document summaries will be made available in Ojibway. Additionally, the use of various media will be explored to ensure that Aboriginal people are well informed of the Signature Site Strategy. Participation of the two First Nations with identified traditional area within the Signature Site, Mishkeegogamang First Nation and the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen is important to the success of the Strategy. These two First Nations will be contacted individually to discuss their involvement in a manner that would best suit their community needs and interests.

Park Management Policy directive PM 11.02.02 prescribes a number of mandatory contacts who will receive all public notices regarding availability of planning documents associated with the planning process. The contacts listed are primarily stakeholders or non-government organizations with provincial interests. This list will be supplemented by recommendations from the Advisory Committee, as well as by the Signature Site mailing list. Contact with municipalities, government ministries, First Nations and local citizen committees are mandatory. This list will be updated as required.

Information meetings will be held in the area communities to solicit information, comment and involvement from the public. Meetings will occur during the Background Information, Issues and Alternatives and Preliminary Strategy stages of the planning process at:

Sioux Lookout  
Pickle Lake  
Savant Lake  
Mishkeegogamang First Nation  
Ojibway Nation of Saugeen

These meetings will present opportunities for the public to easily access draft strategies and to be able to discuss their perspectives directly with Advisory Committee members. During the planning process, meetings may be required in other locations to ensure appropriate involvement by affected individuals or groups. These decisions will be determined as they arise.

Upon approval of the strategy, the appropriate land use policies will be amended and recorded in the Ministry's Land Use Atlas. All resource management plans must be brought into conformity with policies contained in the Strategy over a phase-in period. The phase-in period will reflect the normal review period for the resource plan, unless activities are planned under the plan that contradict the Strategy policies, or the intent of the Strategy. Where the resource plan contradicts Strategy policy or intent, that portion of the resource plan will be amended before activities within or affecting the Signature Site are approved.

Table 1 Planning Steps

Stage	Period	Planning			Consultation	Products
		Strategy	Park Plan	EMA Plan		
1. Terms of Reference	January 2003-	Prepare Terms of Reference			Approval by District Manager, Ontario Parks and Regional Director	• Approved Terms of Reference
2. Invitation to Participate	Feb 2003 to March 2003	Public Notice inviting participation in the Signature Site Strategy, Park and EMA Planning Process.			EBR Notice of Proposal Media – newspaper ads, mailouts OLL website Establish Advisory Committee 45 day review period.	•
3 Background Information	March to May 2003	Compile, analyze and integrate all pertinent information into a comprehensive background information document for the Signature Site, the Park and the EMA. Include preliminary alternatives for the Strategy			EBR Notice of Proposal Media – newspaper ads Update OLL website Information Centres 15 day notice, 45 day review period.	• Background Report
4 Issues and Alternatives	May to August 2003	Assess public input and advice from the Advisory Committee to identify issues and alternative strategies for the Signature Site with preferred alternatives identified.			Revise EBR Proposal Notice Newspaper ads, update OLL website, mailouts Information Centers 15 day prior notice, Review period 45 days	• Release of Issues and Alternatives Document
5 Preliminary Signature Site Strategy	August to November 2003	Selection of the recommended strategy and preparation of supporting policies based on analysis of public input with advice from the Advisory Committee	Within the recommended strategy identify issues and alternatives for the Provincial Park considering public input and advice from the Advisory Committee.	Within the recommended strategy for the Signature Site identify issues and alternatives for the EMA considering public input and advice from the Advisory Committee.	Public Notification Revise EBR Proposal Notice Newspaper ads, update OLL website, mailouts Information Centers 15 day prior notice, Review period 45 days	• Preliminary Strategy • Issues and Alternatives for Park and EMA
6 Approved Signature Site Strategy	November to December 2003	Consider Public response including input on Park and EMA issues and alternatives.  Approve Strategy	Develop preferred Alternatives	Develop preferred Alternatives	Public meetings, Public Notification EBR Decision Notice, Newspaper ads, Update OLL website, mailouts Information Centers 15 day prior notice Inspection and Review period 45 days	• Approved Signature Site Strategy
7 Preliminary Park and EMA Plans	January to March 2004		Confirm preferred alternative and prepare supporting policies based on public input with advice from the Advisory Committee	Confirm preferred alternatives and prepare supporting policies based on public input with advice from the Advisory Committee	Public meeting Revise EBR Proposal Notice, Plan distribution, Information Centres 15 day prior notice, 45 day review period Use of media ads and mailing lists	• Preliminary Park and EMA Plans
8 Approved Park and EMA Plans	April to June 2004		Consider Public response. Ensure final Park Plan supports the overall site Strategy and is consistent with the EMA Plan.	Consider Public response. Ensure final EMA Plan supports the overall site Strategy and is consistent with the Park Plan.	Public meetings, Public Notification EBR Decision Notice, Newspaper ads, Update OLL website, mailouts Information Centers 45 day Inspection period	Approved Park and EMA Plans
9 Implementation	Upon Approval	Implement Strategy, Park and EMA Plans. Revise Land Use Direction in the Atlas.			Public meeting Plan distribution Ongoing Use of media ads and mailing lists	June, 2005