

November 26, 2004

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Ministry of Natural Resources is preparing a management strategy for the St. Raphael Signature Site. As the planning process moves forward, we are asking for public feedback and further suggestions. We are pleased to present the enclosed **St. Raphael Signature Site Issues and Options Document** for your review and comment.

This document identifies areas of interest and concern and presents strategies and options for managing the St. Raphael Signature Site. The resulting strategy will provide direction for the management of St. Raphael Provincial Park and the Miniss Enhanced Management Area.

As someone interested in the long-term management of Ontario's provincial parks and Crown lands, you are invited to participate in the development of the Signature Site Strategy. There is a response booklet included with this document. All comments or suggestions regarding the document or any other aspects of the planning exercise are welcome. Please take the opportunity to submit your comments to either the Ministry of Natural Resources project lead or the St. Raphael Signature Site Advisory Committee at the address below:

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or to this e-mail address:

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Your comments will be carefully considered during the preparation of the St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy.

Yours truly,



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1.0 Introduction

St. Raphael Signature Site comprises more than 150,000 hectares of remote boreal landscape and represents a range of natural and recreational values. The Signature Site was one of nine areas identified in the *Land Use Strategy*, July 1999, which warranted special management direction. This area is known for its remote character, fly-in fishing and circular canoe routes.

The Signature Site contains many lakes connected by the St. Raphael, De Lesseps and Miniss rivers. The Pashkokogan River flows through Minchin Lake, which is connected to the waterway by a portage. These river systems intertwine as a result of two geological faults underlying the area, which have created a series of circular waterways. More than 400 permanent water bodies in the Signature Site form part of the Albany Watershed and provide approximately 2,500 km of shoreline. The importance of the Signature Site as a meeting place has long been recognized by Aboriginal peoples and as a result, there are many old portages and cultural areas.

The Signature Site was identified as a featured area in order to preserve the outstanding scenery and the natural and recreational values. Many of the waterways in the Signature Site have been protected as part of St. Raphael Provincial Park (the Park) which is a waterway class park. The Park surrounds a remote and roadless landscape that has been designated as the Miniss Enhanced Management Area (the EMA); a remote access EMA. The area surrounding the Signature Site is managed as a General Use Area by the Ministry of Natural Resources (the MNR).

Please refer to the Signature Site *Background Document* for a more comprehensive description of the Signature Site and its values.

1.1. Overview

The *Land Use Strategy* provided a starting point for the development of a management strategy for St. Raphael Signature Site (see Table 1 for planning steps). The Signature Site Strategy will strive to ensure the protection and sustainability of the Signature Site ecosystem, while meeting the needs of the public, Aboriginal peoples and stakeholder groups.

Central to this process is the recognition of the Aboriginal aspect of the Signature Site, the need to ensure protection of significant cultural sites, and the provision of economic opportunities to local Aboriginal communities. Nothing within this document is intended to affect existing Native land claims, Aboriginal or Treaty rights.

Table 1: Signature Site Planning Steps from the *Terms of Reference*

Steps in the Signature Site Planning Process
1. Terms of Reference
2. Invitation to Participate
3. Background Information
4. Issues and Options
5. Draft Signature Site Strategy
6. Approved Signature Site Strategy
7. Preliminary (Draft) Park and EMA Plans
8. Approved Park and EMA Plans
9. Implementation

The first step in the development of the Signature Site Strategy was the establishment of a planning team (see Appendix A for list of members) who prepared *Terms of Reference* for the Strategy in January 2003. In February 2003, an *Invitation to Participate* was provided to those Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders, interest groups, and local communities in the northwest region of Ontario who potentially may be affected, to encourage public input to aid the planning process. During the following year, considerable research was conducted. A *Background Document* was prepared incorporating this data as well as input from an appointed advisory committee (see Appendix A for list of members) and concerned citizens. In a series of public information sessions and workshops in January 2004, the *Background Document* was presented to the communities of Pickle Lake, Mishkeegogamang, Savant Lake and Sioux Lookout.

Analysis of background information, combined with further input from the public and the Advisory Committee, has brought the Planning Team to the current point of planning for the Signature Site Strategy (see Appendix B for summary of public consultation during the *Background Document* stage). This *Issues and Options Document* is the fourth step in strategy development for the Signature Site. The purpose of this document is to:

- present the issues identified to date
- develop objectives, and
- offer strategies and management options to meet the objectives and resolve issues.

Because of the linkages between sections in this document, consider reading the entire text before focusing on individual sections. Where there are notable associations, subjects will be cross-referenced in the discussion. Some topics, such as economic opportunities, are addressed throughout the document and therefore no specific sections are dedicated to these topics.

Following the public review period for the *Issues and Options Document*, the Planning Team will examine all comments. A draft Signature Site Strategy will then be prepared, using this input and further advice from the Advisory Committee, Aboriginal peoples, the public and stakeholders. Additional public consultation will take place following the release of this document. Comments received will be considered in preparing the final Signature Site Strategy.

The Signature Site Strategy will be a high-level dynamic document that sets the stage for more detailed planning. An individual provincial park management plan (the Park Plan) and an enhanced management area resource management plan (the EMA Plan) will be developed after the Signature Site Strategy is completed.

1.2. Policy Context

The Ministry of Natural Resources has a vision for the province; to develop natural resources in a sustainable way to meet today's needs and to ensure these resources are available for future generations. The *Land Use Strategy* supported this mandate and outlined the intended strategic direction for the management of 39 million hectares of Crown land in central Ontario. It also provided rationale for identifying the Signature Site as a featured area, and established the overall land use intent and management direction for the area.

The *Crown Land Use Policy Atlas* is the official source of land use policy for Crown land in a large part of Ontario, and provides policies for all land use designations, including parks, conservation reserves and enhanced management areas. The *Crown Land Use Policy Atlas* is accessible to the public on the Internet at <http://crownlanduseatlas.mnr.gov.on.ca>.

MNR undertakings are subject to the Ontario *Environmental Assessment Act*. Management of the Park will be carried out in accordance with legislation, policies and guidelines that are required under *MNR Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*. The *Declaration Order Regarding MNR's Class Environmental Assessment Approval for Forest Management on Crown Lands in Ontario*, and *A Class Environmental Assessment for MNR-Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects* will apply to the projects and activities carried out in the EMA.

St. Raphael Provincial Park

St. Raphael Provincial Park (P2287) was regulated in May 2003 as a waterway class provincial park, encompassing an area of 90,516 hectares. An Interim Management Statement (2001) will guide the use of natural resources and related activities in the Park until a park management plan is in place. Provincial parks are regulated under the *Ontario Provincial Parks Act*. The management of the Park must follow requirements of this act, as well as the *Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies* and direction that was outlined in the *Land Use Strategy*. The purpose of protecting Crown lands as provincial parks in Ontario is “to provide a variety of recreational opportunities and to protect provincially significant natural, cultural and recreational environments in a system of provincial parks.”

Waterway parks are one of six park classes in the Ontario provincial parks system. These parks incorporate outstanding water routes and natural features. MNR has a target to establish at least one representative waterway park in each of the 65 ecodistricts in Ontario. Unlike other park classes, waterway parks are almost entirely made up of aquatic, shoreline and riparian environments. As with most other park classes, waterway parks have a dual role – to provide both environmental protection and recreational opportunities. These parks must include adequate riparian and upland areas to:

- preserve an effective representation of the surrounding landscape, and
- provide a recreational corridor insulated from industrial activity on adjacent lands.

For these reasons, boundaries are typically at least 200 metres from the shoreline, taking into account lines of sight, protection of unique features and ecological integrity.

The Park lies within Ecodistrict 3S-4 and will contribute to the Ontario provincial parks system’s target of having at least one waterway park in each ecodistrict. To meet further parks system targets, a portion of the Park will be classified as a natural environment zone.

The *Land Use Strategy* indicated that limited road construction across the Park would be permitted for forestry operations to access the EMA. These park crossings are to be minimized, constructed to a lowest standard possible and regenerated when no longer required.

Miniss Enhanced Management Area

The Miniss Enhanced Management Area (E2283a) is a 62,705-hectare Remote Access Category EMA. It consists of three parcels: east, central and west. The Enhanced Management Area land use category was established to provide more detailed land use direction for areas with special

features or values. These areas are managed under the *Public Lands Act* and administered by the MNR.

'Remote Access' is one of seven categories of EMAs, established to maintain the remote character of a selected area, with management planning focused on minimizing the impact of access roads. Typically, these areas are relatively large and provide high-quality remote recreation. The *Land Use Strategy* indicated that remote access category EMAs would play a significant role in protecting wilderness values outside of parks and other protected areas and management activities within them must be conducted in a manner that recognizes existing tourism activities.

While the *Land Use Strategy* indicated that forestry, mining, mineral exploration, aggregate extraction and hydroelectric power development may occur in Remote Access EMAs, the remote character of the EMA must be retained. Roads will be permitted for some commercial uses, but their standard and impact must be minimized to greatest extent possible. New roads must be planned through comprehensive long-term access planning that considers values of the area. Some guidelines provided in the *Land Use Strategy* for Remote Access EMAs include:

- Roads should be constructed to the lowest standard possible
- New roads/trails should be constructed in existing corridors where possible
- Layout should consider aesthetics
- Design and construction should facilitate access controls and deactivation, and
- New roads will be restricted from public use.

The above guidelines will apply to all roads constructed in the EMA.

The Signature Site Strategy will meet the *1999 Ontario Forest Accord* commitment that there be 'no impact to wood supply, and only in exceptional cases will wood costs be affected'. The approved Signature Site Strategy will outline activities permitted in the EMA and prescriptions for those.

1.3. Linkages with Forest Management Planning

As permitted under the *Land Use Strategy*, access to the EMA for forest management purposes requires road corridors through the Park. In the absence of a formal strategy for the Signature Site, Bowater Canadian Forest Products, the Sustainable Forest License holder for the Caribou Forest, prepared its 2002 to 2022 Forest Management Plan (FMP), which included forest harvesting in the EMA. Six access points to the EMA were considered in the FMP planning

process, five of which necessitated crossings of the Park. Two options were evaluated by the Ontario Forest Accord Advisory Board and were determined to meet the intent of the Ontario Forest Accord (OFA). The two crossings were incorporated into the 2002 to 2022 Caribou Forest FMP. One of these park crossings (Vincent/Ghost) offered access to forest in the west EMA parcel which had been scheduled for harvest during the first operational period (2002 to 2007). The second crossing (De Lesseps) offered access to future harvest blocks within the central EMA parcel.

Concurrent with forest management planning for the Caribou Forest, an Interim Management Statement (IMS) for the Park was prepared by the Northwest Zone Office of Ontario Parks in 2001, to provide interim direction for the management of the Park until a comprehensive park management plan is developed. The IMS recognized the six access points to allow forestry operations in the EMA.

With the FMP approved in September 2002, some stakeholders and interest groups submitted *requests for individual environmental assessment* (commonly referred to as 'bump-up' requests) to the Ministry of Environment (MOE), regarding forestry operations in the Signature Site. They were particularly concerned about the forestry operations proposed in the Koala Block ('A' block in the west EMA parcel) for the 2002 to 2007 planning period (see Figure 4) in the absence of a Signature Site Strategy, and the Park and EMA Plans. While these 'bump-up' requests were under review, the MNR requested and received permission from the MOE for construction of a primary forestry access road (Kiwi Road) to proceed to within 3.2 kilometers of the park boundary, to provide access to timber allocations outside of the Signature Site. To date, a decision on these 'bump-up' requests had not been made by MOE, and forestry operations in the Signature Site can not proceed.

With responsibility for developing management strategies for the Signature Site, the Sioux Lookout District MNR conducted preliminary investigations for prospective access points to the EMA (some of which included park crossings). The MNR Planning Team identified and screened 10 potential park crossings (including those originally identified by Bowater and the MNR) and selected four operationally feasible access points expected to have the least overall impact on park values. These are discussed further in the [Access section 2.5](#).

Amendments to the 2002 to 2022 FMP will be required if planned operations conflict with either the decisions by MOE on the 'bump-up' requests, or with approved management strategies developed through this planning exercise. New access required through future forest management planning may be authorized if consistent with requirements set out in the St. Raphael Signature Site Strategy, the Park Plan and the EMA Plan.

1.4. Vision

A clear and concise vision is essential to the process of developing a strategy for the Signature Site. After considering existing land use direction and background information, the Advisory Committee recommended the following vision statement for the Signature Site:

'To preserve and protect the remote characteristics and unique values of the St. Raphael Signature Site, while maintaining and balancing traditional, economic and recreational activities and opportunities.'

In addition, the following definition of remote character was established:

'Remote character is a sense of isolation from the outside world and can be influenced by visual disturbances, noise levels, evidence of human influences over the natural environment, and geographic location within the province. The sense of remoteness can be enhanced if an individual has expended great effort to access the area and encounters few people.'

2.0 Issues and Options

2.1. Recreation

Discussion

In this document, 'recreation' refers to pursuits by local residents and tourists for the purpose of leisure, and is not associated with commercial tourism facilities. These activities include day use and multi-day excursions and may or may not include the use of motorized means of travel. Recreational activities within the Signature Site include hunting, fishing, backcountry canoeing and camping, motorized boating, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, dog sledding, blueberry and mushroom harvesting, and the use of all terrain vehicles (ATVs). The number of recreationists who use the Signature Site is unknown, but the current number is estimated to be relatively small compared with the number who visit through tourism operations.

In 2001, a detailed *Resource Recreation Inventory* was completed for the Park. The inventory identified:

- Landforms and features which are or may be used for recreation
- The range of recreational settings the Park is able to provide
- All known existing recreational activities, and
- All means by which the Park can be accessed for recreation.

The Signature Site contains circular canoe routes which are ideal for backcountry canoeing. Existing routes connect most of the Signature Site waterways and link to other canoe routes outside of the Signature Site. Informal campsites, portages, shore lunch areas, and picnic sites have been identified throughout. Facilities vary at these sites from simple campfire rings to established sites complete with picnic tables and fire pits. Sites located closer to tourism facilities are generally more developed and maintained, and have a higher level of use. There has been concern that forestry access roads into the EMA will have a direct impact on several portage trails and canoe routes in the Park. This will be addressed in the plans for both the Park and the EMA.

Recreationists currently use ATVs and snowmobiles on a very limited basis in the Signature Site. ATV and snowmobile use will continue to be permitted in the EMA but will be subject to the 'no motorized use of roads by the general public' clause provided in the *Land Use Strategy*. There may be an opportunity to create ATV and snowmobile trails during the EMA planning process. Recreational ATV and snowmobile use is allowed only on authorized trails in development and access zones in the Park, however no such trails currently exist. New trail development and authorization of existing trails (considered to be suitable for continued use) will be determined during the park management planning process. Until then, ATV and snowmobile use may continue in the Park.

Recreational fishing is regulated under the *Federal Fisheries Act*, and hunting under the Ontario *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*. These activities will continue in the Signature Site, but may be subject to conservation and public safety considerations determined through park management planning. Under park policy, the possession or the use of baitfish is prohibited for angling in low-intensity use waterway parks (where intensity relates to concentration of facilities). This issue is addressed in the Fisheries section 2.2.

Due to the range of activities taking place in the Signature Site, some recreational pursuits may not be compatible with all uses or natural values. Backcountry camping and canoeing, and motorized boating are examples of activities that may conflict. The Signature Site Strategy and subsequent EMA and Park Plans will attempt to lessen potential conflicts between user groups and signature site values.

Objectives and Strategies

Recreation Objective 1: *To provide opportunities for education and interpretation of the Signature Site values*

Strategy A: Highlighting cultural and natural values is considered a high priority in waterway class parks. Interpretation and education options will be outlined in the Park Plan, and partnerships with various interest groups will be encouraged.

Recreation Objective 2: *To promote backcountry recreational opportunities while maintaining remote character*

Strategy A: Promotion, enhancement and maintenance of canoe routes contained within the Signature Site will be carried out. Enhancement of certain portages will be necessary to increase the quality of the canoeing experience and to support increased use of interconnecting canoe routes. This will be addressed through park management planning.

Strategy B: Develop formal direction in the EMA Plan, to guide commercial activities (e.g. forestry operations) when proposed in proximity to recreation areas such as canoe routes. Direction will consider aesthetics, provision of access and safety (e.g. at portage/road intersections).

Strategy C: Environmental impact will be decreased and the number of human encounters minimized by planning the location of campsites and shore lunch sites. This may include development of criteria for the location of new sites (e.g. appropriate distance from other sites), facility standards, and the closing or regeneration of existing sites. This will be addressed through park management planning.

Recreation Objective 3: *To promote front-country recreational opportunities*

Strategy A: A front-country site (e.g. campground, picnic sites, trails and interpretative displays) may be developed at Minchin Lake, adjacent to Highway 599. This site would provide easy public access to the Signature Site and expand backcountry travel possibilities, while providing economic opportunities for local communities. Park management planning will determine the degree of development (see [Access section 2.5](#) for more information on the site location).

Recreation Objective 4: *To ensure that no degradation of water quality occurs from recreational development or use*

Strategy A: Develop a plan for motor boat use within the Park which may include restrictions on horsepower of motors. This will be addressed through park management planning.

2.2. Fisheries

Discussion

Fishing is the most pursued water-based activity in the Signature Site. Walleye (*Stizostedion vitreum*) and (northern) pike (*Esox lucius*) are the preferred species. The primary user groups include resident anglers, Aboriginal peoples and those associated with tourism facilities. Two main base lodges and eight outpost camps are located in the Signature Site (see [Tourism section 2.3](#)). Tourism operators report excellent fishing success, boasting ample fish and catch size. No commercial fishing licences are active in the Signature Site. Commercial fish harvesting did take place until the mid-1990s.

Physical fisheries data for water bodies within the Signature Site is limited, but there has been recent survey work conducted on some of the larger lakes. This information has been used in fisheries analysis to determine annual sustainable fisheries harvest levels in the Signature Site. Results of recent modeling exercises indicate an over-allocation of the walleye fishery on six lakes within the Signature Site with some others reporting limited capacity to support more fishing pressure (see Appendix C). While analyzing this information, it is important to note that the water systems within the Signature Site are interconnected and system-wide user management will be necessary.

Tourism operators believe the models used by the MNR to estimate fisheries capacity do not reflect business realities such as seasonal angling variations, party size, and length of stay, and therefore provide a poor indication of the actual fisheries harvest.

Currently, the fishery resource is allocated to the local tourism facilities alone, and provisions are lacking for Aboriginal subsistence harvesting, resident angling and species conservation.

Regional fish harvesting management direction suggests leaving at least 10 per cent of the maximum sustainable yield for a select species, to limit the risk of accidental over-harvest. Following this direction, the MNR may allow up to 90 per cent of the maximum sustainable yield in future fisheries allocation for the Signature Site.

Lake trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) have been recorded in Hooker and De Lesseps lakes, and lake sturgeon (*Acipenser fulvescens*) in Miniss Lake. Although not physically confirmed, recent reports indicate these species are currently absent from these water bodies, the cause unknown. There was some public interest in the reintroduction of these species, but such a task is beyond the scope of this planning exercise.

There are natural fluctuations in mercury levels in lakes throughout Ontario, including some lakes within the Signature Site. Based on fish analysis for a number of substances including mercury, *The Guide to Eating Ontario Sport Fish 2003-2004* provides advice for safe levels of consumption of sport fish from Ontario waters. This guide is published every other year by the Ministry of the Environment.

Rare fish species identified in the Signature Site *Life Science Inventory* include a river darter (*Percina sp.*) in Churchill Lake. Protection of this species is assisted by including Churchill Lake in the Park, and by *Land Use Strategy* policy restricting new baitfish licenses within the Park (objectives and strategies for baitfish are found in the Other Resource Harvesters section 2.8).

Objectives and Strategies

Fisheries Objective 1: To sustain healthy fish populations

Strategy A: Assess status of existing fish populations

Lake-specific fisheries data is required to provide a better understanding of the Signature Site fish populations. The MNR conducted a Fall Walleye Index Netting program on De Lesseps Lake in September 2004, and further fisheries work on other lakes will be investigated depending on the availability of funding. Cost and resource sharing partnerships with tourism operators and other interest groups will also be explored to support further studies.

Strategy B: Monitor fisheries harvest

Monitoring is necessary to accurately determine fisheries harvest. The MNR will conduct fisheries (creel) surveys as funding permits. Data and resource sharing partnerships with anglers and tourism operators will be explored and encouraged.

Strategy C: Implement harvest controls to reduce pressure on stressed fisheries

Where lake or lake systems are deemed to be over-allocated for preferred game species, control measures will be implemented to ensure future success of the fishery. Some control methods may include:

Option 1: allotment of (a limited number of) tags for sport fishing for some species

Option 2: slot size restriction

Option 3: introduction of conservation limits

Option 4: implementation of catch-and-release activities and use of barbless hooks

Option 5: reduction in lodge and outpost camp 'bed count' on over-allocated lakes

Strategy D: Explore angling opportunities for underutilized species (e.g. whitefish).

Strategy E: Baitfish are currently used for sport fishing purposes in the Park. The possession or use of baitfish for angling in low-intensity use waterway parks is prohibited under park policy. The strategy to address this non-conforming park activity will be determined through the park management planning process. Considerations may include:

- phasing out the use of live bait over a period of years, and
- allowing only baitfish harvested in the Park to be used on lakes within the Park.

Strategy F: Protection of sensitive fish habitat within the Park will be considered in the park management planning process.

Fisheries Objective 2: *To ensure the fisheries resource is appropriately allocated*

Strategy A: In determining the allocation of the allowable harvest, the first allocation will be to the resource (i.e., enough fish are left to ensure viable populations). The remaining allowable harvest will be allocated first to Aboriginal subsistence needs, then to the resident anglers and then tourism operators. The allocation process will include consultation with stakeholders.

2.3. Tourism

Discussion

There are 10 commercial tourism facilities operating within the boundaries of the Signature Site, hosting approximately 3,000 visitors annually. The primary activities associated with these operations are sport fishing and hunting. These tourism facilities are located on Little Miniss Lake, Miniss Lake, Arc Lake, Taper Lake, De Lesseps Lake, Hooker Lake, Churchill Lake and St. Raphael Lake. The main base lodge found on Hooker Lake is located on a private parcel of land and is excluded from the provincial park land base, although park land is used for most activities. Eight of the nine remaining tourism facilities are operated under Land Use Permits (LUPs) administered by the MNR, and are characterized as outpost camps. The main base lodge on De

Lesseps Lake is operated under a Crown Land Lease with an associated airstrip under a Land Use Permit. Four commercial boat caches also exist within the Signature Site and are located on Ghost Lake, Spirit Lake, St. Raphael Lake and Lawson Lake. Existing authorized tourism operations may continue, subject to management prescriptions determined through the Park and EMA management planning processes.

There is concern by some tourism stakeholders that forestry operations in the EMA will have a negative impact on remote tourism values (see [Access section 2.5](#) and [Forestry section 2.6](#)).

There are 12 Bear Management Areas in the Park. Five outpost camps hold seven Bear Management Area licences, one of which is currently available for issue. New Bear Management Area licences may be authorized in the Park, and existing ones may be renewed or transferred except in nature reserve and wilderness zones, with consideration of conservation principles and public safety. Bear Management Area licences in the EMA are permitted to continue.

There is an interest in expanding tourism in the area through outfitting and guiding for activities such as canoeing, hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing. There is also potential to expand winter tourism opportunities within the Signature Site. New tourism activities or facilities would be permitted only where resources exist, and where they are consistent with the vision for the Signature Site. Increased tourism may present economic opportunities for surrounding communities.

As indicated in park policy, the possession or the use of baitfish for angling in low-intensity use waterway parks is prohibited, and is addressed in the [Fisheries section 2.2](#).

Objectives and Strategies

Tourism Objective 1: *To allow for a sustainable resource-based tourism industry while maintaining the remote character of the Signature Site*

Strategy A: Existing authorized operations will be permitted to continue, and will be subject to management prescriptions determined in the Park Plan and the EMA Plan.

Strategy B: Enhanced land tenure may be considered, where appropriate, for existing tourism operations within the Signature Site. Enhanced tenure (i.e., Crown Lease) of tourism facilities may increase business security for tourism operators and allow for expansion or improvement of services, while protecting Signature Site values.

Strategy C: Relocation of tourism facilities within the Signature Site may be explored, as this may allow business services to continue while conserving natural, cultural and recreational values.

Strategy D: Future facility expansion or improvements will consider using design and materials that reflect the natural character of the area, and will use environmentally-sensitive construction techniques.

Strategy E: To encourage operations that are consistent with the Signature Site Strategy, the MNR will work with the private land owner on Hooker Lake.

Strategy F: The expansion of existing facilities and development of new facilities will be considered where resources are sufficient.

Strategy G: Diversification of tourism operations promoting non-consumptive uses, such as ecotourism and cultural tourism highlighting First Nation presence, will be encouraged. Winter tourism is also currently limited and could be expanded (e.g. snowshoeing and cross-country skiing). New opportunities will enhance tourism and conserve limited resources.

Strategy H: Explore opportunities for local communities to benefit from new tourism and recreation in the Signature Site.

2.4. Aboriginal Communities

Discussion

There are several communities with a long history in the Signature Site area. The Signature Site is located in part of the traditional territories of the Mishkeegogamang First Nation and the Ojibway Nation of Saugeen, and is used for hunting, gathering, trapping and other traditional activities. Four members of Mishkeegogamang and two members of Ojibway Nation of Saugeen have trap lines partially or entirely within the Signature Site. There are also habitations belonging to First Nation peoples located in the Park. The Mishkeegogamang First Nation has agreed to participate in the Signature Site Strategy planning process. They have membership on the Advisory Committee and a seat on the Planning Team. The Ojibway Nation of Saugeen has abstained from participation on the Advisory Committee however their participation will continue to be encouraged.

Traditional resource use by Aboriginal peoples for subsistence and ceremonial purposes, consistent with Treaty and Constitutional rights, is permitted to occur in the Signature Site. Such activities will continue with consideration for public safety and conservation objectives. Other uses of the landscape affect Aboriginal peoples use of the land, and limit the benefits that accrue when they exercise their Treaty and Constitutional rights.

The Signature Site should provide increased opportunity for social and economic development for Aboriginal peoples. It is important to note that not all Aboriginal peoples, who have Treaty rights in the area, are in support of development proposed in the Signature Site. Ontario Parks, the Sioux Lookout District Ministry of Natural Resources and the Mishkeegogamang First Nation have signed a *Statement of Understanding Regarding Tourism/Park Operations within the St.*

Raphael Signature Site (January 2004). This statement establishes that these parties will enter into a process to develop partnerships and secure funding to enable Mishkeegogamang First Nation to examine economic development opportunities that may become available through the development of the Signature Site Strategy, the EMA Plan and the Park Plan.

Many Aboriginal peoples have concern about forest harvesting within their Treaty area. Some of the northeastern portion of the Signature Site has been deferred from forest harvesting to allow for additional examination of sensitive cultural areas, and for further relationship building between the forestry company and the Mishkeegogamang First Nation.

Objectives and Strategies

Aboriginal Communities Objective 1: *To ensure that traditional resource uses by Aboriginal peoples are recognized and respected*

Strategy A: Ensure that there are opportunities for Aboriginal peoples to participate in the preparation of process for local resource management plans. This will include working closely with Aboriginal peoples throughout the development of the Signature Site Strategy and future management plans, to ensure that Aboriginal peoples traditional resource uses are recognized and respected in the Signature Site.

Strategy B: Facilitate partnerships with Aboriginal Communities to gather and document their traditional environmental knowledge.

Strategy C: Where appropriate and with permission, portray First Nation current and historical uses of the area in Signature Site promotional material.

Aboriginal Communities Objective 2: *To protect identified First Nation areas of interest*

Strategy A: In consultation with Aboriginal peoples, the Park Plan and the EMA Plan will protect existing homes and known ceremonial, spiritual, educational and subsistence medicinal (plant) interests within the Signature Site (e.g. zoning in the Park and prescriptions in the EMA Plan and future resource management plans).

Aboriginal Communities Objective 3: *To facilitate Aboriginal peoples in pursuing economic opportunities identified within the Signature Site*

Strategy A: Continue to develop partnerships between MNR and local Aboriginal peoples to support feasibility studies, identify economic opportunities and training.

Strategy B: Provide opportunities to ensure that local Aboriginal peoples benefit from economic opportunities generated through the planning and management of the Signature Site.

2.5. Access

Discussion

The St. Raphael Signature Site is reached primarily by air, Highway 599, and a chain of lakes and rivers connecting Lac Seul and Lake St. Joseph to the Signature Site (see Figure 1). There are several trails to the west and south of the site used by trappers and baitfish harvesters. During the operating season, tourism operators reach the site mainly by air, and usually by float plane. Some winter snowmobile access is required for maintenance of camps and lodges. There are no authorized snowmobile or ATV trails within the Signature Site, but some use does occur. Currently, no roads exist within the Signature Site, however there are logging roads in the General Use Area to the northwest and south of the site.

The needs of the different user groups vary, and it will be a challenge to balance the needs of all groups while maintaining the remote character of the Signature Site. The remainder of this access discussion focuses on three areas of consideration: Access for Recreation, Commercial Land-Based Access and Air Access. First Nation use of the Signature Site is discussed in the Aboriginal Communities section 2.4.

2.5.1 Recreation Access

Canoe routes within the Signature Site, historically established by Aboriginal peoples, are enjoyed by recreationists and to a lesser extent used by tourism operators, trappers, baitfish operators (see Figure 1). Portages are currently maintained by users to varying degrees and standards, and some require improvements.

Provincial park regulations allow the use of motorized vehicles on designated trails and roadways, but there are no such trails in the Signature Site. Decisions to develop trails and/or roadways in the Signature Site will be made in the Park and EMA Plans. Traditional means of gaining access to the waterway may continue where consistent with *Land Use Strategy* direction and existing legislation and policy. Use of some unsafe existing entry points along Highway 599 may be discontinued.

2.5.2 Commercial Land-Based Access

Direction on commercial land-based access within the Signature Site was provided through the *Land Use Strategy*. Roads for industrial uses (e.g. forestry, mining) are permitted within the Miniss EMA, and crossings of the Park are permitted to allow forestry access to the EMA. All forestry access roads will be planned as part of the forest management planning process. Access for other authorized uses will be planned in accordance with appropriate legislation and

policy, consistent with the EMA Plan, and will require a road use strategy. Motorized use of these industry roads by the general public will be prohibited.

i. *Industry*

New forestry access roads were planned in the Signature Site. Road construction (including a crossing of the Park between Vincent and Ghost Lake) and timber harvesting are scheduled in the west EMA parcel (as discussed in [section 1.3](#), proposed forestry operations within the Signature Site have been suspended). Currently, direction and considerations for planning, construction, use management, and deactivation of forestry access roads is found within several provincial forestry guidelines, as well as planning documents and approaches (e.g. *Interim Road Use Strategy for the Miniss Enhanced Management Area*, *“Functionally Roadless” Strategy* developed for the 2002 to 2022 Caribou Forest FMP, *Interim Direction – Canoe Routes*) developed in preparation and implementation of the Caribou Forest Management Plan for 2002 to 2022. Direction and strategies outlined in the Signature Site Strategy and in the EMA Plan will supplement these existing guidelines and strategies.

In preparation of this document, all feasible forestry access points to the EMA were identified and screened by the MNR Planning Team (see Appendix D and Figure 4). Five access points were selected for consideration, four of which require crossing of the Park (see Figure 3). To meet direction set out in the *Land Use Strategy*, road crossings of the Park are to be minimized. Should park crossing options in the approved Signature Site Strategy differ from those in the 2002 to 2022 Caribou FMP (as shown in the *Background Document*), an amendment to the FMP will be required.

ii. *Tourism Operators*

Current land-based access by commercial tourism operators is limited. One winter trail extends from Highway 599 across Minchin Lake to the facility on De Lesseps Lake. This winter trail is located almost exclusively within the Park. Continued use of this trail by the De Lesseps Lake tourism operator will be allowed, subject to prescriptions determined through park management planning. Motorized use of industry roads by tourism operators will not be permitted.

iii. *Trappers and Baitfish Block Operators*

Land-based access for licensed resource harvesters (i.e., trappers and baitfish block operators) will be permitted to continue. Motorized use of the industry roads by trappers and baitfish block operators is addressed in [Other Commercial Resource Harvesters section 2.8](#).

2.5.3 Air Access

Float planes provide an essential means of transportation to the Signature Site for the tourism industry and for air charters. Aircraft are also used to a limited degree by trappers, baitfish harvesters and the general public. The MNR requires periodic air access to facilitate activities such as field work, enforcement and fire suppression. One airstrip for wheeled aircraft exists within the boundary of the Park. This airstrip is used primarily to transport guests and supplies to the tourism facility located on De Lesseps Lake, and is presently authorized under the *Public Lands Act*. Aircraft use will be permitted to continue at current levels, subject to management direction in the Park Plan.

The *Provincial Parks Act Regulation 952* prohibits aircraft landings in Provincial Parks other than those listed in section 24.2. Once the Ontario *Provincial Parks Act Regulation* is amended to permit aircraft landings in St. Raphael Provincial Park, aircraft landings within the Park will be authorized by an aircraft landing permit. Until then, this non-conforming use will be permitted to continue in the Park. Aircraft landings within the EMA will not be controlled.

Objectives and Strategies

Access Objective 1: *To provide recreational access while limiting the number of developed access points to the Signature Site*

Strategy A: Develop one (controlled) access point on the east side of the Signature Site at Minchin Lake (see Figure 2).

Strategy B: Develop limited 'low-key' access point(s) to the Signature Site (see Figure 2).

Option 1

South of the Signature Site near Aki Lake.

Option 2

Northwest of the Signature Site near Meadwell Lake.

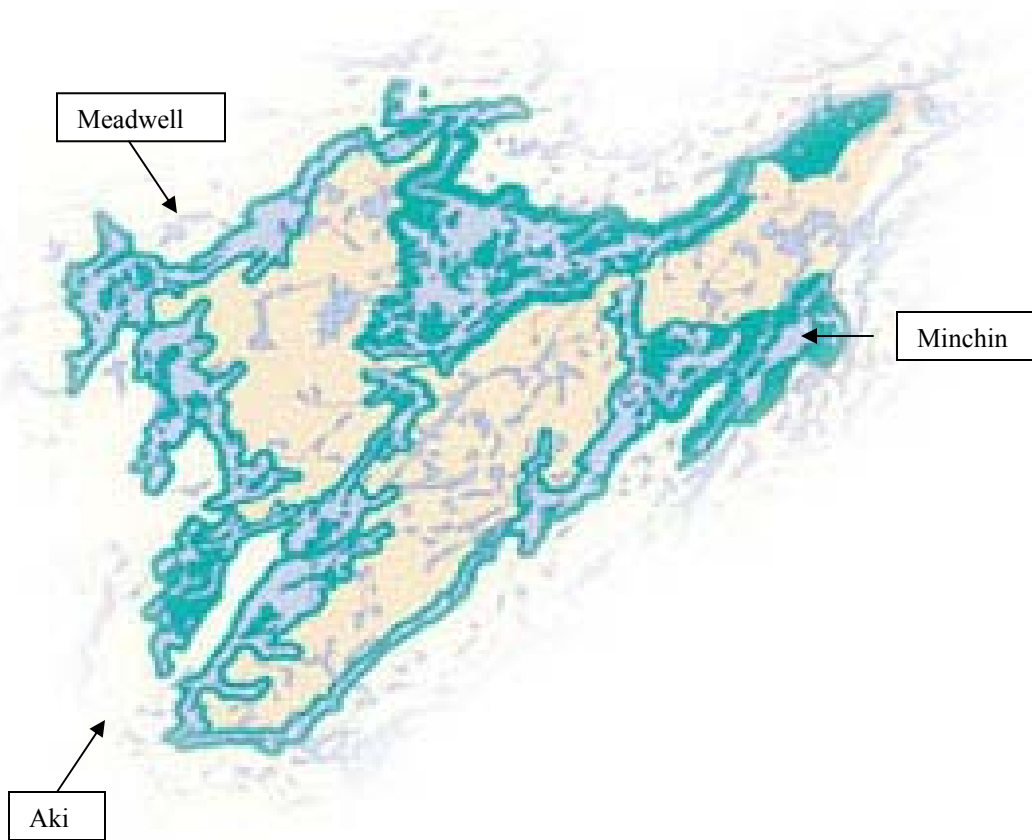


Figure 2: Potential Public Access Points to St. Raphael Provincial Park

Access Objective 2: *To allow limited access for industrial use while maintaining the remote character of the Signature Site*

Strategy A: Identify access points into the EMA for forestry purposes that limit the number of crossings of the Park and allow access to all three EMA parcels (see Figures 1, 3 and 4, and Appendix D). Forestry access will be planned and approved through the forest management planning process. Access corridors through the Park will be zoned accordingly during park management planning.

One access point will be permitted from Highway 599 into the east EMA parcel.

Option 1

This option provides for increased flexibility for the location and planning of roads for forestry purposes. The number of park crossings is not minimized. Only one entry point will be permitted to each EMA parcel at one time.

Four entry points to the EMA parcels (see Appendix D for MNR screening criteria) and the associated park crossings will be permitted, as follows:

- A – Vincent/Ghost
- B – Lawson
- C – De Lesseps
- D – Arc/Miniss

Option 2

This option provides some flexibility for the location and planning of roads for forestry purposes through the forest management planning process. The number of park crossings is not minimized. Only one entry point will be permitted to each EMA parcel at one time.

Three entry points to the EMA parcels (see Appendix D for MNR screening criteria) and the associated park crossings will be permitted, as follows:

Option 2a)

- B – Lawson
- C - De Lesseps
- D – Arc/Miniss

Option 2b)

- A – Vincent/Ghost
- C - De Lesseps
- D – Arc/Miniss

Option 2c)

- A – Vincent/Ghost
- B – Lawson
- D – Arc/Miniss

Option 3

This option has the least amount of flexibility for the location of entry points in the forest management planning process. The number of park crossings is minimized.

One entry location to each EMA parcel will be authorized (see Appendix D for MNR screening criteria).

Option 3a)

- A – Vincent/Ghost
- B – Lawson

Option 3b)

- A – Vincent/Ghost
- C - De Lesseps

Option 3c)

- A – Vincent/Ghost
- D – Arc/Miniss

Option 3d)

- C - De Lesseps
- D – Arc/Miniss

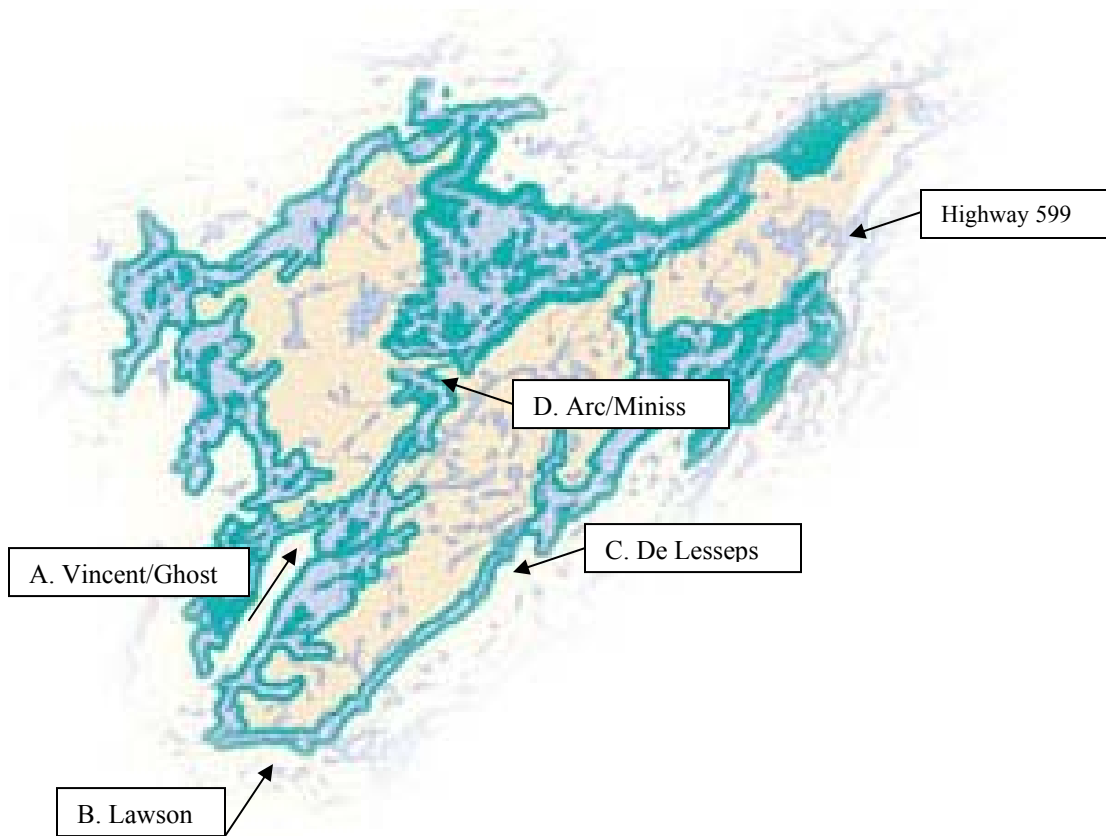


Figure 3: Potential Industry Access Points to the EMA

Strategy B: Establish location strategies for industry roads within the EMA.

As a general principle, all roads in the EMA must be constructed to the lowest standard possible. The EMA Plan would provide direction and prescriptions for road location, density, construction standards and deactivation requirements (see [Forestry section 2.6](#) for strategies on construction standards and deactivation of forestry roads).

Option 1

Each parcel of the EMA will be divided into three zones; permanent, non-permanent and no-road zones. Within the no-road zone, forest harvesting, trapping and baitfishing activities will be allowed, but no roads or new trails associated with these activities will be permitted. A winter road zone may also be considered. Each zone will have an individual set of road guidelines which will include construction standards and deactivation requirements. A map outlining zone boundaries will be included in the EMA Plan.

Option 2

A set of guidelines will be developed to provide direction for the location of roads within the entire EMA, and would include direction for matters such as setback distances from lake-viewsheds and critical wildlife habitat areas. These guidelines would be provided in the EMA Plan. Further direction would be included for construction standards and deactivation requirements.

Strategy C: Implement access control measures and carry out compliance monitoring

Access control measures will be applied on forestry roads in the General Use Area adjacent to the Park (e.g. Kiwi Road). Control measures may include:

- strategic placement of signage prohibiting public access
- water crossing removal, and
- strategic placement of physical impediments (e.g. gates.)

Road closures will be managed through the *Public Lands Act* and enforcement activities will be implemented through MNR compliance planning.

Access Objective 3: *To allow air access while maintaining the remote character of the Signature Site*

Strategy A: Control aircraft landings in the Park (e.g. limit the number of aircraft landing permits issued to the general public).

Strategy B: Tourism operators will be encouraged to land as close to facilities as possible in the EMA, and to land with consideration of other Signature Site users.

2.6. Forestry

Discussion

A primary intent of preparing a Signature Site Strategy is to provide direction for activities, including forestry. Commercial forest harvesting is not permitted in the Park. Timber salvage may occur in areas of the Park to facilitate construction or for resource management purposes. This will be further explored during the park planning process. Forestry operations are permitted in the EMA provided that careful consideration is given to the areas' wilderness values. Harvesting near the Park boundary will be done with consideration for Signature Site values.

The Miniss Enhanced Management Area is part of the Caribou Forest land base. Bowater Canadian Forest Products holds the Sustainable Forest License for the Caribou Forest and has an approved Forest Management Plan in place for the period from 2002 to 2022. The management strategies for the Signature Site will be developed to ensure there is no impact on wood supply and no undue cost increase to the forestry industry.

Operations have been planned in the EMA for an area between St. Raphael and Vincent Lake referred to as the Koala Block, during the 2002 to 2007 operating term of the FMP. These operations are currently the subject of *requests for individual environmental assessments* under consideration by the Minister of Environment (refer to [section 1.3](#) for more detail). Amendments to the Caribou Forest FMP will be required, should currently approved operations be incompatible with new direction arising from the development of the Signature Site Strategy or the EMA Plan.

A new FMP for the Caribou Forest is being initiated for the 2007 to 2027 planning period, and will incorporate direction provided by the Signature Site Strategy and the EMA Plan. Some of the northeastern portions of the EMA have been deferred from the 2002 to 2007 harvest schedule to allow additional examination of sensitive cultural areas and for further relationship building with the Mishkeegogamang First Nation.

Based upon *Land Use Strategy* direction, future forest management planning for the EMA will be carried out recognizing local tourism activities and with sensitivity to retaining remote character, by minimizing development of permanent forestry access roads, developing roads to the lowest standard possible, deactivating roads when they are no longer required for forestry purposes, ensuring roads are closed to use by the general public, and ensuring areas under active operation are kept to a minimum. The EMA Plan will provide strategies for the construction of forestry and other industry roads and direction for other operations in the Signature Site. There was a desire of some stakeholders to explore modified and experimental forest harvesting practices which were outside of the scope of this planning exercise (e.g. helicopter logging).

Objectives and Strategies

Forestry Objective 1: *To allow forestry operations while considering the wilderness values associated with tourism in the Signature Site*

Strategy A: Encourage active participation of tourism operators in forest management planning. This will include the use of the Resource Stewardship Agreement process to ensure direct dialogue between the forest and tourism industry in identifying tourism values and interests and developing prescriptions to minimize the impact on values.

Strategy B: Develop direction for road construction within the EMA, outlining limits on the number and density of roads and landings, limits on location and numbers of gravel and borrow pits, management of slash piles, revegetation requirements for gravel and borrow pits, and road deactivation strategies. In keeping with approved engineering practices, road standards will also be determined.

Strategy C: Explore opportunity for altering timing of access construction and use to minimize impacts to other users.

Strategy D: Explore feasibility of reducing the duration of active operations by concentrating harvesting and silviculture activities into a shortened timeframe.

Forestry Objective 2: *To minimize impacts of forestry access roads in the Park*

Strategy A: Provide direction for clearing and construction techniques for roads and ancillary sites associated with road construction. Consider such things as timing of construction and use, debris disposal, road width, and temporary and permanent deactivation and re-vegetation of cleared areas.

2.7. Mineral Exploration, Mining and Aggregate Extraction

Discussion

Although there are currently no active mining claims in the Signature Site, the geology of the area is of interest to prospectors and those in the mining sector. The Miniss River Fault divides the Signature Site between Medcalf Lake and Hooker Lake and is considered provincially significant due to its extent and accessibility. This fault has significant potential for kimberlite and diamond mineral deposits. The Lake St. Joseph Fault, found to the north of the Signature Site, has potential for rare-element pegmatites, which may hold economic concentrations of minerals containing tantalum, lithium and cesium. Aggregate extraction, mineral exploration and mining will be permitted in the EMA. These activities will not be permitted in the Park.

To protect remote values, aggregate extraction (for use within the Signature Site only), mineral exploration and mining may occur only if the related industrial activity is carried out to maintain the remote qualities of the EMA. Guidelines for best practices for mineral exploration activities has been developed by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines in conjunction with the MNR. The intent of these guidelines is to promote the conservation of recreational and natural values on Crown land by the mining industry. Construction and motorized use of roads for prospecting purposes will not be authorized.

Objectives and Strategies

Mining and Aggregate Objective 1: *To maintain opportunities for aggregate extraction, mineral exploration and mining, while recognizing the remote values associated with the EMA*

Strategy A: Apply guidelines of best practices for mining operations within the EMA.

Strategy B: Operating guidelines for the protection of remote tourism and important fish and wildlife habitat will be considered in aggregate permit application reviews.

Strategy C: Park crossings are not permitted for mining or exploration therefore forestry access roads must be used to cross the Park. Access required for mining activities should be planned considering use of existing forestry roads in the EMA.

Strategy D: Where work permits are required for new roads or water crossings, they will contain special provisions to support the maintenance of the remote qualities of the EMA.

2.8. Other Commercial Resource Harvesters

Discussion

Eleven commercial traplines are located entirely or partially in the Signature Site. Existing trapline operations will continue in the Signature Site subject to conditions identified in the EMA Plan and the Park Plan. Trails currently used to gain access to traplines in the Signature Site are allowed to remain. The relocation of existing trails and cabins will be subject to ecological principles and management planning. New trapping operations including the construction of new cabins will be permitted in the EMA, subject to EMA direction and existing policy. No new operations are permitted in the Park, including the construction of new cabins and trails. Aboriginal peoples exercising existing Treaty rights are permitted to continue trapping, subject to applicable legislation and regulation.

Seventeen baitfish blocks are located entirely or partially within the Signature Site. These are licensed to six individual holders. Existing baitfish harvesting is permitted to continue indefinitely in the Signature Site, subject to conditions identified in the EMA Plan and the Park Plan. New cabins constructed for the purposes of baitfish harvesting operations will be permitted in the EMA, subject to EMA direction and existing policy. Motorized use of existing trails to access baitfish blocks is permitted in the Signature Site. No new baitfish harvesting licenses will be issued for blocks in the Park, however an active license may be transferred. Baitfish harvesters have indicated that baitfish lakes are sensitive to the introduction of non-native baitfish and predatory fish species.

The *Land Use Strategy* stated that public use of the roads in the EMA is restricted, although some trappers and baitfish harvesters have made a case that they should be excluded from this restriction. Some licensed resource harvesters have requested occasional use of roads.

Resource Harvest Objective 1: *To allow access for resource harvesting, while maintaining the remote character of the Signature Site*

Strategy A: Trapping and commercial bait fishing will be permitted to continue in the Signature Site, subject to directions outlined in the Park Plan and the EMA Plan.

Strategy B: Determine if trappers and baitfish harvesters should have motorized use of roads in the EMA.

Option 1

Motorized use of access roads in the EMA will be permitted only for industrial operations. Restricted user groups (motorized) include trappers and baitfish harvesters.

Option 2

Allow trappers and baitfish harvesters (excluding those related to tourism facilities) to use the roads in the EMA, subject to road prescriptions and timelines required for forestry.

Resource Harvest Objective 2: *To minimize the impact of industrial and commercial development on baitfish lakes*

Strategy A: Limit access to baitfish lakes

Develop roads and trails to limit (human) accessibility to baitfish lakes and to minimize the risk of introduction of foreign game species. Some approaches to minimize impact may include:

- locating roads and stream crossings far enough from identified lakes, and
- providing educational material to anglers and other users about the dangers of transporting species

2.9. Wildlife

Discussion

The *Life Science Inventory* conducted for the Signature Site identified 17 mammals and 80 bird species which use the Signature Site. Bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), buffleheads (*Bucephala albeola*), and forest-dwelling woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) were among the species observed in the Signature Site and identified as provincially significant in the *Life Science Inventory*. The Signature Site may provide suitable habitat for the wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), another species of concern in the province (although none were observed during the inventory.) Also noted were regionally significant sandhill cranes (*Grus canadensis*) and common terns (*Sterna hirundo*), as well as four provincially significant dragonfly species. The Committee of the Status Endangered Species in Canada (COSEWIC) lists woodland caribou (boreal population) as threatened, and wolverine as endangered. The Committee on the Status of Species-at-Risk in Ontario (COSSARO) has added these species to the provincial listing (September 2004). The bald eagle is a listed species under the *Ontario Endangered Species Act*.

The Park affords protection of riparian and island environments, which provides important habitat for critical life stages for many of these species. Game species with relatively stable populations are conserved through wildlife harvest management at a landscape level (i.e., wildlife management units). Furbearers are managed using quota allocations and trapping. Habitat for some bird species is currently managed by the use of habitat management guidelines.

The Signature Site provides caribou winter habitat, summer calving grounds and nursery areas. To offer effective habitat for caribou, a continuous supply of suitable areas for both summer and winter use is required. As a result, caribou habitat is managed over large areas and over long periods of time. Small protected and enhanced management areas are not intended to wholly protect large mammal populations, but to contribute to landscape level wildlife conservation.

Woodland caribou conservation in the EMA will be supported by the use of the *Forest Management Guidelines for the Conservation of Woodland Caribou: A Landscape Approach* (woodland caribou guidelines), along with lower impact access and requirements for enhanced deactivation of roads. The linear nature and presence of lakes in the Park will protect caribou travel corridors, and calving and nursery areas. The location of specific calving and nursery areas will also influence park zoning.

As the MNR amends existing, or creates new wildlife policies or guidelines, they will be incorporated into the management strategies for wildlife habitat in the Signature Site.

Objective and Strategies

Wildlife Objective 1: *To contribute to sustaining healthy wildlife populations on a landscape level*

Strategy A: Woodland caribou habitat in the EMA will be conserved through the application of the woodland caribou guidelines. Further habitat conservation will be achieved by managing for remote access in the EMA. Protection of identified travel corridors, and calving and nursery areas will be explored during the park planning process.

Strategy B: Moose, black bear, and small furbearer harvesting will continue to be managed on a landscape or wildlife management unit level.

Strategy C: Once wolverine management guidelines are developed, they will be used for planning future activities in the EMA and the Park.

Strategy D: Existing management guidelines will continue to be applied in the EMA for other wildlife species, including featured bird species. Enhanced habitat protection strategies will be considered during the park and EMA planning process.

Strategy E: Prohibiting the use of lead sinkers, which are harmful if ingested by wildlife (particularly birds and turtles), will be explored during the park management planning process.

2.10. Earth Science

Discussion

Earth science features are formed from geomorphological and geological processes. In the *Earth Science Inventory Report* completed for the Signature Site, there were several subsurface and landform features cited as regionally or provincially significant. There is an opportunity for these areas to contribute significantly to the geological conservation objectives of the provincial park system.

All of the identified significant surface features, such as the tombolo on Medcalf Lake and the Birdsfoot esker, are within the Park. Commercial tourism and recreation have had minimal impact

on earth science features in the Signature Site, however as many of these features are exposed along lake shorelines, they may be vulnerable to impacts from increased recreational and other authorized uses.

Objectives and Strategies

Earth Science Objective 1: *To protect significant earth science features*

Strategy A: In the EMA Plan, provide direction to protect earth science features identified as provincially significant.

Strategy B: Through park management planning, protect earth science features identified as provincially significant, by using strategies such as careful placement or relocation of facilities and providing educational material to the public.

2.11. Cultural Heritage

Discussion

Cultural heritage refers to pre-contact and historical sites where there is evidence of historical use by Aboriginal peoples and early settlers. Cultural sites and areas of interest identified in the Signature Site include:

- early Aboriginal peoples pictographs and ceremonial sites
- an Aboriginal peoples village on Miniss lake, in use until the 1970s
- sites associated with trade routes during the 1800s
- areas used for freight hauling in the early 1900s, and
- portages on existing waterways

Objectives and Strategies

Cultural Heritage Objective 1: *To protect identified cultural heritage sites*

Strategy A: Identify and record cultural heritage areas of interest through collaboration with Aboriginal peoples and other interested parties.

Strategy B: Protect sensitive cultural sites in the Park using tools such as zoning.

Strategy C: Protect sensitive cultural sites in the EMA through prescribing industry setbacks.

Strategy D: Minimize human disturbance to identified cultural heritage sites through education and application of protocols established by the Ministry of Culture.

Strategy A: Illustrate trade routes, portages and other historical sites on promotional and educational material.

2.12. Vegetation Management

Discussion

For the purposes of this document, vegetation management refers to activity relating to the conservation and management of Signature Site flora (also see [Forestry section 2.6](#)). There was stakeholder interest in exploring the possibility of leaving 'green corridors' connecting St. Raphael Signature Site to other parks, however this is beyond the scope of this planning exercise.

The *Life Sciences Inventory* identified several vegetation communities and species within the Signature Site that may require management. Significant communities included a patterned fen near Medcalf Lake, several old-growth red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) stands on Miniss and Hooker Lakes, a black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*) floodplain swamp on the St. Raphael River, and a seepage fen community on De Lesseps Lake. The inventory also identified four provincially rare plant species: fir club-moss (*Huperzia selago*), interior rush (*Juncus interior*), Vasey's rush (*Juncus vaseyi*) and inland blue grass (*Poa interior*). These four rare species are all located within the boundaries of the Park.

Within the boreal region of Northwestern Ontario, forest fires are relatively common. During a forest fire, organic materials on the ground are reduced, and seeds from pioneer species such as jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*) are released. Very few large fires have occurred in the Signature Site with the exception of De Lesseps Lake and Miniss Lake burns (1996). Thick duff layers found throughout the Signature Site demonstrate a lack of fire activity.

The red pine stands in the Signature Site are provincially significant, as they are growing at the northern extent of their range. These stands are aging without sufficient regeneration to support their continued presence in the Signature Site, since the success of natural pine stands is dependent on hot ground fires which have been lacking. The new *Forest Fire Management Strategy* (2004) and the *Fire Management Policy for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves* (2004), consider the importance of managing, rather than extinguishing, all fires in provincial parks. The role of fire in provincial parks must be determined through fire management planning.

In the *Life Science Inventory*, invasive species (e.g. common plantain) were found growing on campsites, trails and other clearings in the Signature Site. Some members of the public identified

a need for measures to control invasive species in the Signature Site. Concern has also been expressed about the use of non-natural means to control invasive species in the Signature Site.

Objective and Strategies

Vegetation Management Objective 1: *To limit disturbance to ecologically and culturally important vegetation species and communities*

Strategy A: Through park and EMA management planning, consider sensitive and culturally important vegetation communities (e.g. known medicinal plant collection areas) in campsite and forestry access planning.

Strategy B: Provide direction for ground (vegetation) cover protection in the EMA and Park Plan.

Strategy C: Conserve riparian areas of streams and lakes through use of setbacks.

Strategy D: Limit invasive plant species introduction and proliferation (e.g. use of native seed for regeneration).

Strategy E: Explore use of vegetation management techniques which support maintenance and enhancement of Signature Site values (e.g. vary the size and location of herbicide spray areas to protect song bird nesting habitat).

Vegetation Management Objective 2: *To restore important ecological systems by use of fire*

Strategy A: Following the park management planning process, a fire management plan will be developed for the Park. The following options may be considered in the development of this plan:

Option 1:

Use prescribed fire to reduce fuel loads and encourage regeneration in identified areas within the Park (e.g. islands in Hooker Lake containing red pine stands).

Option 2:

In selected areas, where it is ecologically beneficial, fires resulting from natural causes may not be suppressed (e.g. islands in Hooker Lake containing red pine stands).

2.13. Adjacent Lands

Discussion

Although the Signature Site Strategy, the Park Plan and EMA Plan will not dictate activities outside of the Signature Site, decisions and direction provided in these documents should influence the use of lands adjacent to the Signature Site. Management direction provided for the Signature Site may necessitate amendments to the Crown Land Use Policy Atlas, and other documents such as the Caribou and Lac Seul Forest Management Plans.

St. Raphael Provincial Park is bordered by a General Use Area which includes lands in the Caribou and Lac Seul Forests. These adjacent lands are used for various commercial, recreational and personal undertakings. Natural ecosystems do not necessarily conform to man-made boundaries, and uses of lands adjacent to the Signature Site have the potential to impact natural systems. It is recommended that adjacent land users conduct their business with an awareness of all values of the area.

It is recognized that residents and communities in proximity to the Signature Site have close ties to the land. The Signature Site provides protection for much of the land-base as more than half has been designated as a provincial park. The Signature Site Strategy will provide insight and greater certainty for future pursuits, as well as the potential for economic benefit. Aboriginal peoples, stakeholders and other interested parties are encouraged to identify their matters of interest during this planning process.

3.0 Toward a Final Strategy

The public will have an opportunity to provide input on this *Issues and Options Document* during a 45-day comment period. Based on public comments, Advisory Committee input, *Background Document* information, best scientific practices, and requirements of existing legislation and government policy, the MNR Planning Team will evaluate the various resource management strategies and options to determine which ones best achieve the objectives and overall vision for the Signature Site. Preferred strategies and options determined by the Planning Team will be presented to the public through the distribution of a Draft Signature Site Strategy. An additional 45-day public comment period will follow before the final Signature Site Strategy is produced.

The Signature Site Strategy will be an umbrella document that clarifies policy and establishes direction for activities in the Signature Site. The strategy will also define permitted uses and coordinate land use intent and policy direction for the Park and the EMA (see Table 2). Circumstances may change which could require the Signature Site Strategy to be amended but any proposed amendments must not alter the overall intent of the Strategy.

Table 2: St. Raphael Signature Site Planning Products and Timeline

Product	Completion Date
Signature Site Strategy Terms of Reference	April 2003
Signature Site Strategy Background	January 2004
Signature Site Issues and Options	November 2004
Draft Signature Site Strategy	Winter/Spring 2005
Signature Site Strategy	2005
Draft EMA Resource Management Plan	2005
EMA Resource Management Plan	2005
Park Issues and Options	2005
Draft Park Management Plan	2005
Park Management Plan	2005

4.0 Glossary of Terms

Aggregate – Mineral material such as sand, gravel, shells, slag, broken stone, or any combinations of these, used for construction.

Area of Concern (AOC) designations – A geographic area within a forestry block which is adjacent to an identified natural resource feature, land use or value that may be affected by forest management activities.

Backcountry – A generic term that refers to areas that are relatively unmodified and usually accessible only by foot, watercraft, aircraft or off-highway vehicle.

Borrow Pit – A small excavation site containing fill material used for road construction and maintenance.

Capacity (in fisheries terms) – The maximum amount or number that can be contained or accommodated.

Caribou Mosaic – A composite map made of inlayed sections of landscape units incorporating stand age class and known caribou utilization areas, to form patterns which maintain large tracts of interconnected forest on the land base to maintain a sustainable supply of high-quality caribou winter habitat.

Commercial – An activity which is intended to draw revenue.

Conservation Limits – Planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction or neglect.

Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA) – An Act of the Ontario legislature to provide for the sustainability of Crown forests and, in accordance with that objective, to manage Crown forests to meet social, economic and environmental needs of present and future generations.

Deactivation (road) – When a road has fulfilled its original use and is no longer required, or when maintenance cannot be justified. Roads can be deactivated to varying levels from simple removal of stream crossings to complete removal and seeding and/or planting of the roadbed.

Environmental Assessment (EA) – A decision-making process used to promote good environmental planning by assessing the potential effects of certain activities on the environment. In Ontario, this process is defined in the *Environmental Assessment Act*.

Ecodistrict – A subdivision of an Ecoregion based upon a characteristic pattern of physiographic features which set relatively fairly large areas apart from one another.

Ecological Integrity – The general capability of an area to support and maintain species and communities, and to provide ecological functions comparable to those of the natural habitats in the area.

Fall Walleye Index Netting program (FWIN) – A provincial standard for assessing walleye populations in Ontario.

Forest Management Plan (FMP) – A document containing pertinent information and prescriptions through which forest policy, aims, and objectives are translated into a continuity of specific treatments on a management unit for a specified period of years.

Front-country – Activities within the Park that are not backcountry, such as day hiking, campgrounds and educational programs.

General Use Area – Includes all Crown lands (in the *Land Use Strategy* planning area) not placed into a specific designation or EMA.

Industry – A productive or profit-making enterprise that employs a large number of personnel and dedicates considerable investment capital

Interim Management Statement (IMS) – Intended to guide the use of natural resources and related activities within a park until a park management plan is prepared.

Invasive Species – A species that is likely to cause environmental harm or displace native species, and does not naturally occur in the area that it affects.

Life Science Inventory – An inventory conducted to identify and describe representative vegetation types, special features, sites of interest, natural processes and human disturbances, and to catalogue flora and fauna.

Maximum Sustained Yield – An estimate of the highest possible level of harvesting (per kg or hectare) that can occur without reducing the fish population in any given lake.

Morphoedaphic Index (MEI) – This model estimates maximum potential fish yield or lake productivity. The model was originally developed based on large lakes with commercial fisheries. The MEI model uses two types of data: mean depth of the lake and total dissolved solids.

Motorized (Use) – The use of a motor vehicle which is propelled or driven by means other than muscular power. This definition does not include the use of aircraft or water vessels.

Natural Environment Zone – A park resource allocation which includes natural, cultural and aesthetic landscapes where minimum development is required to support low-intensity recreational activities. This allocation is determined in the park management plan.

Nature Reserve Zone – A park resource allocation encompassing any significant earth and life science features which require management distinct from that in adjacent zones, and also a protective buffer with an absolute minimum of development. This allocation is determined in the park management plan.

Ontario Forest Accord (1999) – Commitments by representatives of the forest industry, Partnership for Public Lands and the Ministry of Natural Resources as an accepted approach to establish protected areas while considering the needs of the forest industry in central and northern Ontario.

Ontario Forest Accord Advisory Board (OFAAB) – Appointed representatives of the forest industry, the environmental community and the MNR, to assist in the implementation of the Ontario Forest Accord.

Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy (LUS) – A guidance document that sets a framework for future land and resource management on Crown lands in the planning area.

Peak Summer (Use) Period – Refers to the timeframe during which most recreational activity takes place in the Signature Site, typically between May and September.

Pioneer Species – Species that grow in disturbed areas until they are naturally replaced by other species.

Prescribed Burn – Intentionally ignited broadcast burning for the purpose of forest management and ecological prosperity.

Resource Stewardship Agreement – An agreement negotiated between a licenced resource-based tourism operation and a sustainable forest licensee, which focuses on issues related in particular to the extent, method and timing of forest management (including harvest, renewal and maintenance), and the location, construction, management and possible retirement of forestry access roads.

Regeneration – The renewal of a tree crop whether by natural (self-sown seed or by vegetative means) or artificial means (seeding and planting).

Riparian Environments – an area of land along the banks of a stream, which often exhibits slightly different vegetation and habitats than the surrounding landscape. Because of this variation, riparian areas are considered to be a valuable wildlife habitat and important for the protection of water quality.

Silviculture – Branch of forestry dealing with the development and care of forests.

Sustainable Forest Licence (SFL) – A 20-year renewable licence through which the licence holder becomes responsible for all aspects of forest management planning and renewal within standards set by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Thermal-Optical Habitat (TOHA) – A fisheries model that provides the best means of estimating the maximum sustainable yield of walleye lakes. The model uses six types of data: mean depth of the lake, total dissolved solids, maximum depth, lake area, Secchi depth and growing degree days.

Value – A term used to describe known natural resource features and land uses

Wilderness Zone – A park resource allocation that includes wilderness landscapes of appropriate size and integrity which protect significant natural and cultural features and are suitable for wilderness experiences, as well as a protective buffer with an absolute minimum of development. This allocation is determined in the park management plan.

5.0 Selected References*

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***some of these documents and other government publications are available electronically at www.mnr.gov.on.ca/MNR/pubs/pubmenu.html**

Appendix A: Advisory Committee and Planning Team Members

Advisory Committee Members

Name	Affiliation
Jacob Latto	Tourism – Facility Based
Tom Terry	Tourism – Backcountry
Ted Frisby	Forestry
Mary Kenny	Environment
Allen Best	Mining
Al Lago	Hunting and Angling
Michael Quince	Local Citizen’s Committee
Kathy Poling	Municipality of Sioux Lookout
George Seaton	Pickle Lake
Ernie Leschied	Resource Harvesting
Robert Briskett	Mishkeegogamang First Nation
John Derouin	Mishkeegogamang First Nation
Tom Waasaykeesic	Mishkeegogamang First Nation
Vacant	Ojibway Nation of Saugeen
Vacant	Savant Lake

Planning Team Members

Name	Title
Glenn Birch	Project Lead
Ramona Szyska	District Planner
Jaime Hilbert	Park Planner
Magdalena Kowalczyk	Signature Site Intern
Michelle Robinson	Biologist, Lac Seul Forest
Christine Friedrichsmeier	Biologist, Caribou Forest
Bob Paterson	North Area Supervisor, Sioux Lookout District
Joe Muli	Senior IRM Technician, Sioux Lookout District
Abraham Drost	Regional Resident Geologist
Frank Bastone	MNDM
Fred Richardson	MNDM
Steve Allen	Forester, Caribou Forest
Arne Saari	Forester, Lac Seul Forest
Donna Smith	Regional Communications
Wayne Moxam	Fire Operations Supervisor
Scott Ellery	Park Superintendent
Julie Sullivan	NW Zone Park Planner
Londa Mortson	NW Region Planner
John Derouin	Mishkeegogamang First Nation

Appendix B: Summary of Public Consultation on Background Document

1. Project: St. Raphael Signature Site – Background Document Stage	2. OLL Land Use Strategy Area #: St. Raphael Provincial Park (P2287) Miniss Enhanced Management Area (E2283a)	3. MNR District: Sioux Lookout
4.0 Public and Aboriginal Consultation		
4.1 Public Consultation Details of Public Consultation: <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Summarize the nature of the Background Document consultation for the St. Raphael Signature Site.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 349 Background Document packages were sent out in the mail on January 27th, 2004. • Approximately 5 Background Document packages were returned with change address, or unknown address marked on the envelope. • Background Document packages included one Background Document and a letter from the Information Management Supervisor indicating that comments on this document will be accepted until March 13th, 2004. • The stakeholder mailing list included mandatory regional contacts, Ontario Parks mandatory contact list, extracts from the Caribou FMP mailing list, interest groups, individuals who have expressed interest in the Signature Site and land tenure holders. • A Release of Background Document newspaper ad was placed in the Sioux Lookout Bulletin on January 14, 2004 and in the Wawatay on January 15, 2004. In addition Get Involved! postcards were sent out in the mail on January 9, 2004 outlining dates and events. • Open House meetings were held in: Mishkeegogamang on January 20th, 2004 and January 27th, 2004 at 9am to 1pm in the community center, Pickle Lake on January 20th, 2004 and January 27th, 2004 at 6pm to 9pm in the community center, Savant Lake on January 22nd, 2004 and January 27th, 2004 at 6pm to 9pm and Sioux Lookout on January 21st, 2004 and January 28th, 2004 in the Knights of Columbus Hall at 6pm to 9pm. • The first meeting of the open house was a presentation on St. Raphael Signature Site, the second meeting was a workshop where questions were asked and discussed in groups. • EBR was posted on January 28, 2004, public review period from January 28, 2004 to March 13, 2004. • There were approximately 20 written or verbal responses. Meeting attendance totals not including Advisory Committee and MNR where 15 for Mishkeegogamang, 14 for Pickle Lake, 32 for Sioux Lookout and 10 for Savant Lake. 		

Summary of Significant Issues:

The following questions and comment are a summary of the responses gathered from the Background Document stage.

- Received comments and suggestions concerning the reclassification of the EMA into a wilderness or recreation area.
- Logging within the Signature Site should not be allowed.
- Logging roads (i.e. Kiwi Road) are a major concern to tourism industry.
- Increased access to and within the Signature Site will jeopardize its remote character.
- Limiting public access to and within the Signature Site will result in decreased economic benefits for local area.
- How successful will access restriction measures be, how will the MNR monitor access, what alternatives are available if access restriction measures are not working.
- Concerned that limits on air traffic control will negatively impact existing fly in tourism.
- Conflicting views on future development of trails for ATV use.
- Woodland Caribou habitat being destroyed by logging activities in the EMA.
- Green corridors should be developed between St. Raphael Signature Site and Wabakimi Provincial Park.
- Apparent over allocation of fishery's on some lakes.
- Concerns regarding bed-capacity management.
- Park boundaries should be expanded to provide adequate protection for woodland caribou and critical caribou calving sites in the EMA should be included in the Park.
- Can use of general use areas such as campsites, picnic areas etc. continue.
- Issues related to harvesting, use/possession of bait-fish.

Analysis of Issues:

Ministry analysis of the significant issues documented above.

- Comments and recommendations received during the Background Document phase will be considered during the Issues and Alternatives phase of the planning process.
- A response to every comment and recommendation regarding the Background Document was prepared by the district office.
- Ontario Living Legacy Land Use Strategy states that forestry is a permitted use in the Miniss Enhanced Management Area.
- Land Use Strategy and Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies indicate that existing tourism, including fly-in operations can continue. The issues and alternatives document will consider options to control the increase in air traffic if it is found to be negatively impacting the remote character of the area.
- Unless the current Remote Access category EMA was not accomplishing its objectives of carrying out forest management activities in a manner that will recognize tourism activities and backcountry recreational activities that are consistent with policy, it will not be reclassified.
- Access to the Miniss EMA for forest management purposes requires that road corridors be established through the St. Raphael Provincial Park. Two crossings identified within the 2002 to 2022 FMP met the intent of the Ontario Forest Accord Article 20. It is the MNR's intention to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on all identified crossings into the Miniss EMA at the Issues and Alternatives stage. Should the selected option in the approved Signature Site Strategy require changes to the current approved forest operation, this would be achieved through an amendment to the Caribou Forest Management Plan.

- ATV and snowmobile are a permitted use within the waterway park on authorized trails, however there are no authorized trails within the Signature Site. This issue will be further addressed in the Issues and Alternatives Document.
- While the St. Raphael Provincial Park can contribute to the protection of specific Caribou habitat values (travel corridors and calving sites) it can not by itself provide a complete range of Caribou habitat in the same manner that the Mosaic will when applied to the broader landscape.
- Establishment of green corridors linking protected areas is outside the current planning mandate
- Use of existing recreational sites (i.e. campsites, picnic areas) depends on zoning determined in the Parks management planning process.
- Remote Access EMAs are intended to maintain the remote character of selected areas. The remote character will be retained through planning and establishing standards for the location and the use or abandonment of roads and trail. EMAs may lead to modifications (e.g. timing, location, method, access) in resource-management practices in order to recognize other land use values.

4.2 Aboriginal Consultation

Details of Aboriginal Consultation:

Summary of Aboriginal Consultation:

- Two open houses were held in Mishkeegogamang on January 20th, 2004 and January 27th, 2004 regarding the Background Document
- Input on the Background Document was gathered through a questionnaire.
- Mishkeegogamang First Nation identified their concerns, comments and questions about the Background Document

Summary of Significant Issues:

Summary of significant issues during the Aboriginal consultation process

- Although Mishkeegogamang participates actively in the Advisory Committee meetings they were instructed by their Chief Council not to vote on issues arising.
- Prior to the Background Document phase but, after the Invitation to Participate phase the Mishkeegogamang First Nation requested additions and changes to be made to the planning process that was presented to them
- Cultural site protection
- Interested in economic development that would benefit the area and residents
- Had a commercial fishing licence on St. Raphael 30 years ago, not clear why it was taken away, MNR is looking into it

Analysis of Issues:

Ministry analysis of significant issues documented above.

- Mishkeegogamang First Nation and the MNR have come to an agreement on the planning process
- Field Services Division and Ontario Parks has signed a Statement of Understanding with Mishkeegogamang First Nation for \$25, 000 to study economic development opportunities.
- MNR involved First Nations in clearing portages in St. Raphael
- Future involvement of First Nations and the Provincial Park have been discussed

5.0 Recommendations

Future Planning:

Issues raised during public or Aboriginal consultation which need to be addressed in future planning for this area include:

- Public access restriction measures on forest operation roads
- Future development of trail for ATV use
- The state of the fisheries
- Clarify history of First Nations Commercial Fishing License
- Clarification of Bait-fishing policy regarding harvesting and use/possession in the Park

6.0 Approval of Consultation Documentation

MNR District Contact Person:
John Thomson
District Planner
Phone (807) 737-5032
Fax (807) 737-1813

Ontario Parks Contact Person:
Julie Sullivan
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Signature on Original Copy

Signature on Original Copy

Al Mathews
District Manager
Sioux Lookout District
July 6, 2004

Tim Sullivan
Northwest Zone Manager
Ontario Parks
July 6, 2004

Appendix C: Discussion of Fisheries Models

Clarification Memorandum by Jeri Graham, North Area Biologist

Date: June 2, 2004

Subject: Lake Capacities for Fisheries on Major Lakes in the St. Raphael Signature Site Comparing the Morphoedaphic Index Model (MEI) and Thermal-Optical-Habitat Model (TOHA) for Walleye Productivity

The following table provides a comparison between the lake productivity calculations presented in the St. Raphael Signature Site Background Document, which were based on the old MNR standard MEI model, with the estimate of lake productivity for walleye provided by the TOHA model.

The morphoedaphic index (MEI) model estimates maximum potential fish yield for a lake using the two variables "total dissolved solids" and "mean depth" (OMNR, 1979). This model has been the OMNR standard for about 25 years. It is applied to lakes on a large-scale watershed basis. The St. Raphael Signature Site lies on the boundary between the Southern James-Hudson Bay watershed and the Winnipeg-Nelson watershed. For the purposes of the background report and the Model 1 figures presented here, the Winnipeg-Nelson equation was used as an estimator. I felt it was more reflective of the conditions, particularly length of growing season, in the Signature Site, as opposed to the northern model which covers an area with a much shorter growing season. The MEI model may be used to estimate lake productivity for a number of fish species, not just walleye.

The Thermal-Optical-Habitat model (TOHA) estimates the maximum sustainable yield of lakes specifically for walleye (Lester et al. 2002), using not only "total dissolved solids" and "mean depth", but also "secchi depth", "maximum depth" and "growing degree days". This model has been available for consideration and "field testing" by district biologists (primarily Fisheries Forum members) for the past couple of years and was recently included in one of the "Percid Community Synthesis Reports" in February 2004 (Kerr et al. 2004) as the best means of estimating productivity of walleye lakes. It provides an estimate of walleye productivity, or maximum sustainable yield of walleye, that is much more lake specific and species specific than the MEI model.

For most lakes in the St. Raphael Signature Site, productivity for walleye with the TOHA model is less than with the MEI estimate. This likely reflects a more accurate estimate, using the TOHA model, of growing degree days available on these lakes. Some of the smaller lakes actually show an increase in walleye potential. This may be a factor of the role lake area plays in the TOHA equations, and the reduced reliability of the MEI model for small lakes (as it was developed based on large lakes with commercial fisheries).

The table below concentrates primarily on walleye productivity, as this species is currently the most sought after game fish. Harvesting at the point of maximum sustainable yield is not recommended as the potential for exceeding the point of sustainability is too great. Therefore, 90% of maximum sustainable yield is used (generally across the NW Region) as the highest recommended level of walleye harvest.

I estimated the extent to which the lake fisheries capacity is currently used, based on the bed counts at each commercial tourism operation. The regional standard bed allocation is 200 kg fish/bed for the season. Sioux Lookout district further separates this into 80% harvest of walleye, and 20% of northern pike. There is no creel information to indicate whether this estimate is appropriate for the camps within the Signature Site.

Lake Capacities for Fisheries on Major Lakes Within the St. Raphael Signature Site

Lake Name	Maximum sustainable yield (kg/yr) - all species	Maximum sustainable yield (kg/yr) - walleye		Desired management limit - 90% of Maximum sustainable yield (kg/yr) – walleye		Existing # of beds in commercial tourism operation	Estimated capacity used currently (based on regional standard bed allocation (200 kg fish/bed), estimated 80% of catch as walleye) *	Estimated fisheries capacity (kg walleye/yr) available for subsistence, other anglers (canoeists), and future commercial development		Lakes with potential overuse issues
		Model 1 (MEI)	Model 2 (TOHA)	Model 1 (MEI)	Model 2 (TOHA)			Model 1 (MEI)	Model 2 (TOHA)	
Arc	903	291	413	262	372	12	1920	-1658	-1548	X
Churchill	13,288	4252	2914	3827	2623	17	2720	1107	-97	
Cutcliff	852	273	139	246	125	0	0	246	125	**
Delesseps	12,977	4153	2392	3738	2153	26	4160	-422	-2007	X
Hooker	6319	2022	1345	1820	1211	26	4160	-2340	-2950	X
Lawson	847	272	416	245	374	0	0	245	374	**
Minchin	4823	1543	797	1389	717	0	0	1389	717	
Miniss	17743	5678	4298	5110	3868	22	3520	1590	348	
Payne	1373	438	570	394	513	0	0	394	513	
Peg	1193	382	246	344	221	0	0	344	221	**
St. Raphael	13371	4279	2878	3851	2590	8	1280	2571	1310	
Taper	624	200	218	180	196	9	1440	-1260	-1244	X
Vincent	4021	1287	717	1158	645	0	0	1158	645	**,@
Little Miniss	1458	467	304	420	274	6	960	-540	-686	X

* - Estimated number of kilograms harvested based on bed count only, NOT on creel data.

** - These lakes are linked to Hooker Lake and are likely used by anglers from commercial operations on Hooker Lake. The combined capacity of Hooker, Cutcliff, Lawson, Peg and Vincent Lakes is well under the estimated current use (based on bed count) on Hooker Lake.

@ - Vincent is accessible from Arc and Taper Lakes, as well as from Hooker Lake. The combined capacity of Arc, Taper and Vincent Lakes is still well under the estimated current use (based on bed count) on Arc and Taper Lakes.

I have used kilograms available instead of potential beds to get away from outpost beds as the only possible use for the fisheries resource. The only lake where there is substantial unused fisheries capacity is St. Raphael. Even then, much of this capacity may be taken up by the canoe tripping public; the volume of canoe traffic is expected to increase with the increased promotion of the area as a Signature Site. A rough estimate used in the past to sustain non-commercial activities was 25% of the lake productivity. If we look at the system as a whole, there will likely need to be some management actions taken to allow for enough fisheries capacity to be available for canoeists and First Nation subsistence fishing. Such measures should only be taken after further study of the “health” of the fishery (through netting surveys), actual levels of current use (various creel surveys and discussions with operators), and as part of a more detailed fisheries management plan.

Kerr, S.J., A.J. Dextrase, N.P. Lester, C.A. Lewis, and H.J. Rietveld. 2004. Strategies for managing walleye in Ontario. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Peterborough, Ontario. 24 p. + appendices.

*Lester, N.P., P.A. Ryan, R.S. Kushneriuk, A. Dextrase, and M. Rawson. 2002. The effect of water clarity on walleye (*Stizostedion vitreum*) habitat and yield. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Peterborough, Ontario.*

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1979. Ontario fish yield estimates. Report of SPOF Working Group Number Four, 48 p.

Appendix D: Initial Screening Results- Potential Industry Access Points to the EMA

The Ministry of Natural Resources Signature Site Planning Team originally screened 11 possible EMA access points for forestry. The shaded boxes below represent those access points which have been accepted for review at this current stage in the planning process.

Criteria considered in initial screening included effects on First Nations and the environment, as well as economics and logistics for the forest industry.

Refer to Figure 4 for locations of the 11 screened forestry access points

Access Point #	Description	Considerations	Accepted for Further Review
1	Ghost/Vincent Lakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dry land access (no direct fish habitat impacts, no navigational concerns, less expensive construction) • direct access to the south end of the west EMA parcel (scheduled for harvesting prior to 2017) • not in the vicinity of any identified sensitive vegetation communities • in close proximity to three lakes with tourism operations (Arc, Hooker and St. Raphael Lakes) • crosses a canoe portage • adjacent to proposed recreational access point • osprey's nest in close proximity 	Yes
2	De Lesseps Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dry land access (no direct fish habitat impacts, no navigational concerns, less expensive construction) • direct access to the north end of the central EMA parcel (not scheduled for harvesting until 2077) • not in the vicinity of any identified sensitive vegetation communities • in close proximity to one lake with a tourism operation (De Lesseps Lake) • no tourism facilities currently on Lawson Lake • may cross a canoe portage 	Yes
3	Minchin Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water crossing (possible impacts to fish habitat, navigational concerns and more expensive construction) • large crossing of the Park required • near a documented campsite location • adjacent to a proposed recreational development site • direct access off of Hwy 599 • not in the vicinity of any identified sensitive vegetation communities 	No
4	Churchill Lake North End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water crossing (possible impacts to fish habitat, navigational concerns and more expensive construction) • in close proximity to two lakes with tourism operations (Churchill Lake and Lake St. Joseph) • may cross a canoe portage • road system approaching site from the northwest (Trist Block) is in place (harvesting is completed and roads decommissioned) 	No

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct access to the north end of the west EMA parcel (not scheduled for harvest until 2037) • isolation of roads would assist in access control • not in the vicinity of any identified sensitive vegetation communities 	
5	Arc/ Miniss Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water crossing (possible impacts to fish habitat, navigational concerns and more expensive construction) • provides direct link between west and central EMA parcels • no additional access controls for public motorized use are required as crossing is from one EMA parcel to another EMA parcel • not in the vicinity of any identified sensitive vegetation communities • crossing has a significant slope • osprey's nest in close proximity • may cross a canoe portage • close to identified caribou summer calving and nursery areas • caribou sightings during 2003 aerial survey • in close proximity to one lake with a tourism operation (Arc Lake) • in close proximity to a possible wilderness zone (to be determined in the Park Plan) 	Yes
6	Hwy 599	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dry land access (no direct fish habitat impacts, no navigational concerns, less expensive construction) • EMA access directly from highway 599 • enters EMA directly without crossing the Park • only feasible way to access the east EMA parcel • adjacent to Aboriginal habitations along Highway 599 • not in the vicinity of any identified sensitive vegetation communities 	Yes
7	St. Raphael/ Churchill Lakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water crossing (possible impacts to fish habitat, navigational concerns and more expensive construction) • in close proximity to two lakes with tourism operations (Churchill and St. Raphael Lakes) (one very close) • directly impacts Black Ash stand identified in Life Science Inventory as significant and identified by Aboriginal peoples as being culturally important • may cross a canoe portage • in close proximity to caribou summer calving and nursery areas • water crossing is level and crossing fairly narrow • direct access to the north end of the west EMA parcel (not scheduled for harvest until 2037) • direct access to existing forestry roads west of the Signature Site 	No
8	Lawson Lake South End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water crossing (possible impacts to fish habitat, navigational concerns and more expensive construction) • provides direct access to the south end of the central EMA parcel (not scheduled for harvest until 2057) • provides a direct link to existing forest access roads to the south of the Signature Site (Normandy Block) • not in the vicinity of any identified sensitive vegetation communities • in close proximity to one lake with a tourism operation 	Yes

		<p>(Hooker Lake)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know cultural values in immediate area • near a documented campsite location • provides direct access to the south end of the central EMA parcel (not scheduled for harvest until 2057) 	
9	De Lesseps River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water crossing (possible impacts to fish habitat, navigational concerns and more expensive construction) • identified by Aboriginal peoples as culturally significant • in close proximity to four tourism operations (Miniss and De Lesseps Lakes) • in close proximity to a seepage fen identified as a significant vegetation community in the Life Science Inventory • in close proximity to a possible wilderness zone (to be determined in the Park Plan) • provides direct link between the east and central EMA parcels • no additional access controls for public motorized use are required as crossing is from one EMA parcel to another EMA parcel 	No
10	Medcalf Lake South End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dry land access (no direct fish habitat impacts, no navigational concerns, less expensive construction) • in close proximity to the Medcalf Peatland identified as a significant vegetation community in the Life Science Inventory • crosses the Park • provides access to portions of the Caribou Forest west of Medcalf Lake (not allocated for harvest until 2017) 	No
11	Miniss and St. Raphael Rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • water crossing (possible impacts to fish habitat, navigational concerns and more expensive construction) • in close proximity to three tourism operations (Miniss Lake) • in close proximity to Lake St. Joseph tourism operations • does not directly access either the east or west EMA parcels • in connection with crossing 4 would allow wood from the west EMA parcel to be moved down Highway 599 • not in the vicinity of any identified sensitive vegetation communities • isolation of roads to the northwest would assist in access control 	No

