



Holland Landing Prairie

Terms of Reference



Approval Statement

I am pleased to approve the Terms of Reference for the preparation of a park management plan for Holland Landing Prairie Provincial Park (Nature Reserve class). These terms of reference meet all requirements as set out in the *Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual*. They will effectively guide the park planning process through to the completion of the approved park management plan.



Adair Ireland-Smith
Director, Ontario Parks



Date

TERMS OF REFERENCE
Holland Landing Prairie Provincial Park (Nature Reserve Class)
Park Management Planning Process

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the terms of reference is to:

- Explain the rationale for initiating a management plan for Holland Landing Prairie Provincial Park (Nature Reserve Class);
- Outline a proposed planning approach for the preparation of the plan; and
- Identify the staff and other resources required for the planning process.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Holland Landing Prairie Provincial Park is located in the Town of East Gwillimbury and the Regional Municipality of York, approximately ten kilometers south of Lake Simcoe (Figure 1). The 34.2 hectare site protects one of the last remaining areas of tallgrass prairie in Ontario and includes almost the entire relict prairie known from this area. The prairie and associated shrub thickets provide habitat for several provincially and regionally rare plant species. The park was established in 1994 as a nature reserve class park, and is regulated under the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act (R.R.O.2007, O. Reg. 316/07, s. 2

Tallgrass prairie was once a common feature of the Ontario landscape, but due to urbanization, agriculture, pollution and other causes, less than 3 percent of the original area remains in the province (Rodger1998). Remaining tallgrass prairie habitat is now largely restricted to small, isolated pockets in southwestern, central, and northwestern Ontario. The significance of the Holland Landing site has been recognized since 1819, when botanist John Goldie discovered several unusual plant species in this area. The prairie was rediscovered in 1976 by A.A. Reznicek, and in 1982 a report for the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority recognized the site as the most significant botanical area in its jurisdiction (Ecologistics1982).

Holland Landing Prairie is located in Ecodistrict 6E-6, and is situated within the Simcoe Lowlands physiographic region on the Algonquin Lake Plain. Well-drained soils are primarily Brighton sandy loams, composed of deep deposits of sand and silt underlain by clay till. Seventeen Ecological Land Classification community units have been identified in the park and five landform/vegetation associations are present. A total of 61 species of birds, one amphibian, two reptile and seven mammal species have been found at the site.

Holland Landing Prairie is known to have been used by Aboriginal peoples as recently as 150 years ago during the fur trade as a stopover point, and may have been used as an encampment site. The nature reserve is also in close proximity to two known Aboriginal burial sites from the period of the Mississauga tribe. The exact site of the locally significant Fort Gwillimbury is unknown but is likely located near the East branch of the Holland River.

Conifer plantations were planted throughout much of the park in 1946 and 1949 by the Department of Lands and Forests, and again in 1975 by the Ministry of Natural Resources as forest research plots. A small area of upland deciduous forest composed of Sugar Maple with White Birch and Trembling Aspen is located in the north east quadrant of the park. A few

smaller stands of early successional forest types are also scattered throughout the nature reserve.

A hydro right-of-way intersects the north-west quadrant of the Holland Landing Prairie, and residential development abuts the south and west boundaries of the site. The site is well used among local residents and visitors for a variety of recreational activities, including hiking, picnicking, nature appreciation and cross-country skiing. An authorized snowmobile trail and a walking trail run along the east boundary of the site (Figure 2). A second branch of the walking trail runs through the centre of the site. Unauthorized ATV and other off-road vehicular use is also common and has resulted in the development of several informal trails.

The plant communities of Holland Landing Prairie are extremely sensitive to disturbance, and are being increasingly impacted by a number of factors. Conifer plantations have become well established and are encroaching significantly into existing and potential prairie habitat. Extension of lawns and gardens into the park from adjacent residential properties, dumping of yard waste, and removal of fencing are ongoing concerns. Unauthorized off-road vehicle use and informal trail development continue to impact sensitive vegetation and erode the sandy soils of the park. The increasing presence of a variety of non-native, invasive plant species poses a significant threat to the biodiversity of the site. Management considerations will need to address each of these impacts.

Holland Landing Prairie Provincial Park was established to protect the significant natural heritage features of the site, and to provide high quality opportunities for natural heritage appreciation for both residents of Ontario and visitors to the province. The management of the park is currently directed by an Interim Management Statement, approved in 1995.

The *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act* requires that management direction be prepared for all provincial parks. The objective of this process is to develop a management plan commencing in winter 2008. A park management plan will define the protected area's goal, objectives and long-term direction for the protection, development, management and use of its natural values. The plan will also address such issues as permitted activities, site restoration and resource management.

The primary role of this planning process will be to identify the contributions that Holland Landing Prairie makes to the achievement of the four Ontario Provincial Parks system objectives, which are protection, heritage appreciation, outdoor recreation and scientific research. In addition, the planning process will identify and establish management policies aimed at maintaining or enhancing those contributions. Various reports, supporting documents, unpublished data and other relevant information will be made available for public review, at various stages of the planning process (as discussed in Section 6), during the development of the park management plan.

Based on its significant natural heritage values, Holland Landing Prairie was protected and regulated under the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act* as a Nature Reserve class provincial park. In cooperation with the MNR Aurora District, an amendment to the *Maple District Land Use Guidelines* will be harmonized with the park management planning process whenever possible to address pertinent changes in land use direction.

Figure 1 – Regional Context



3.0 PLANNING AREA

The planning area will include the entire 34.2 hectare property. Park management plans apply only to the area within the regulated boundary of the park. Within the park boundary, the protection objective will be achieved through appropriate zoning, control of uses and activities and education. Ecological processes will be monitored. Lessening the potential impacts where appropriate will help ensure continued protection of significant features.

4.0 PLANNING TEAM

The planning team will consist of:

- Park Superintendent, Sibbald Point, Duclos Point, and Holland Landing Provincial Parks;
- Management Planning Specialist, Central Zone, Ontario Parks, Huntsville;
- Assistant Park Planner, Central Zone, Ontario Parks, Huntsville;
- Representative, Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) Aurora District, Aurora; and
- Representative, Town of East Gwillimbury.
- Representative, the Regional Municipality of York

Ex officio members of the planning team will be the Zone Manager, Central Zone, Ontario Parks, the Zone Ecologist, Central Zone, Ontario Parks, and the Senior Policy and Planning Coordinator, Planning and Research Section, Ontario Parks. The planning team may consult externally with academics, knowledgeable stakeholders and others as required for scientific and technical expertise.

5.0 INTEGRATION

Integration of the various resource management and stewardship interests will be addressed at appropriate stages during the planning process.

Internal Integration

- The draft terms of reference, background information, preliminary park management plan and recommended park management plan will be circulated for review to Ontario Parks, MNR (i.e. Aurora District, Southern Region and Main Office) prior to approval by the Manager, Planning and Research and the Director, Ontario Parks;
- At the preliminary plan stage, MNR programs will be consulted regarding significant resource values within the protected area and environs, management options which could be considered within the existing park policy framework, consistency of proposed protected area polices with policy direction for other MNR programs;
- If mutually desirable, a meeting regarding the planning process, issues, options, etc., could be held with Ontario Parks, District and/or Regional staff;
- Staff from other Ministry programs may be asked to serve as resource contacts during the public consultation phase of the planning process;
- Advance copies of all communications products will be shared with the local MNR communications/information officer prior to Ontario Parks' approval; and,
- An amendment to the *Aurora District Land Use Guidelines* will be undertaken in cooperation with the MNR Southern District.

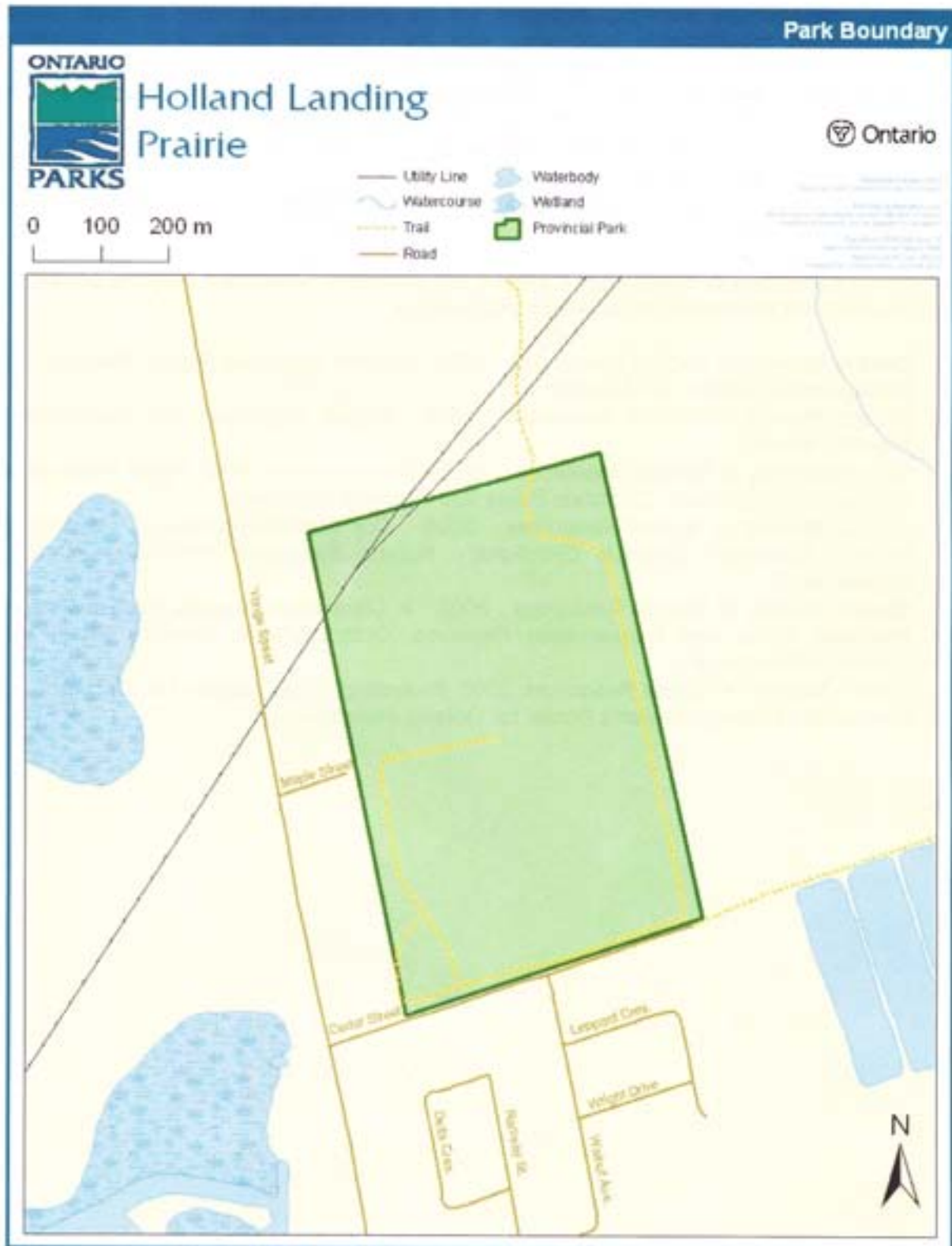
External Integration

- Park management planning materials will be distributed in order to meet public consultation requirements associated with *the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act*, *the Environmental Assessment Act* and the *Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR)*, taking direction from Ontario Parks Bulletin PM 11.02.02 (currently under review) and the *Ontario Provincial Parks Management Planning Manual*;
- The Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation will be consulted in advance of each stage of the planning process;
- Meetings may be held with stakeholders to discuss the planning process, issues, options, etc., as required.

The following documents or background materials will guide and support the planning project. A list of background information is included in Appendix A.

- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1992. *Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies, 1992 Update*.
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1994. *Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual*.
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1995. *Environmental Bill of Rights Procedures Manual (Working Draft)*. Corporate Policy and Planning Secretariat.
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2005. *Our Sustainable Future - Ministry of Natural Resources Strategic Directions*. Natural Resources Information Centre, Peterborough.
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2005. *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*. Ontario Parks, Queen's Printer for Ontario, Peterborough.
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2005. *Protecting What Sustains Us: Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy*. Queen's Printer for Ontario, Peterborough.

Figure 2 – Park Boundary and Facilities



6.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation will be conducted in an open and transparent manner. During the term of the planning process, First Nations, the public and various interest groups will be provided with:

Stage 1: *an invitation to participate in the planning process, an invitation to inspect the approved terms of reference, and an opportunity to review the background information file (45 days);*

Stage 2: *an opportunity to review the preliminary park management plan (45 days); and*

Stage 3: *Upon approval by the Managing Director of Ontario Parks, the park management plan can be released to the public. Briefing sessions to various groups may take place, however there will be no public consultation at this point.*

If optional planning steps are necessary (e.g., to deal with complex management options that may emerge as a result of the planning process) additional public consultation opportunities will be provided to address them. The public consultation proposals are outlined in the following sections.

6.1 Stage 1 – Initial Invitation to Participate, Terms of Reference and Background Information File

Following approval of the terms of reference, public notice will be given as follows:

- *pre-consultation with the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation;*
- *mailing to the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, agencies, interest groups, the Town of East Gwillimbury town Council, Regional Municipality of York, the local Member of Provincial Parliament and other politicians as required;*
- *mailings to local residents, including residents of: Yonge street between Parkside Drive and Queensville Sideroad, Maple Street, the Cedar Street and Parkside Drive subdivision, 2nd Concession between Doane Road and Queensville Sideroad, and the south side of Queensville Sideroad between the 2nd Concession and Yonge Street;*
- *posting of the approved terms of reference on the Ontario Parks website;*
- *paid advertisement in the Era Banner;*
- *posting of an EBR policy proposal notice on the Environmental Registry;*
- *posted notices onsite; and*
- *meetings with stakeholder groups and agencies, as required.*

These notices will outline the proposed planning process, identify the opportunities for public input and solicit public comments.

Copies of the terms of reference and the background information file will be available for viewing at the Ontario Parks Central Zone office in Huntsville, the East Gwillimbury Civic Centre, and the Holland Landing branch of the East Gwillimbury Public Library. The terms of reference will also be available online at www.ontarioparks.com/planning.

6.2 Stage 2 – Preliminary Park Management Plan

Following the evaluation and public review of the terms of reference and background information, a preferred approach is developed and draft policies are refined. This package becomes the basis for the preliminary park management plan. This document will meet all content requirements as set out in the *Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual*. The plan will outline a prioritized implementation strategy for their respective elements and summarize any public consultation that has occurred. The preliminary park management plan will stand as a proposed statement of Ontario Parks' preferred policy for the site. Consultation carried out at this stage will consist of the following:

- *pre-consultation with the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation;*
- *mailing to the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, agencies, interest groups, the Town of East Gwillimbury town Council, Regional Municipality of York, the local Member of Provincial Parliament and other politicians as required;*
- *mailings to local residents, including residents of: Yonge street between Parkside Drive and Queensville Sideroad, Maple Street, the Cedar Street and Parkside Drive subdivision, 2nd Concession between Doane Road and Queensville Sideroad, and the south side of Queensville Sideroad between the 2nd Concession and Yonge Street;*
- *posting of the preliminary park management plan on the Ontario Parks website;*
- *paid advertisement in the Era Banner;*
- *revised posting of an EBR policy proposal notice on the Environmental Registry;*
- *staffed open house;*
- *posted notices onsite; and*
- *meetings with stakeholder groups and agencies, as required.*

The preliminary park management plan will be made available electronically or by paper copy to be circulated to adjacent landowners, agencies, municipalities, interest groups, politicians and First Nations. Within the preliminary park management plan there will be a summary explanation of the opportunities for public participation and how input was considered.

If required, a proposed amendment to the *Maple District Land Use Guidelines* will be initiated at this stage of the park management planning process to address any pertinent changes in land use direction.

6.3 Stage 3 – Approved Park Management Plan

The final park management plan will take into consideration public response to the preliminary park management plan. The approved park management plan will meet all content requirements as set out in the *Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual*. The document will contain all policies and directional statements for the management of the protected area. Notification of plan release will be carried out at this stage and will consist of the following:

- *briefing the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation;*
- *mailing to the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, agencies, interest groups, the Town of East Gwillimbury town Council, Regional Municipality of York, the local Member of Provincial Parliament and other politicians as required;*
- *mailings to local residents, including residents of: Yonge street between Parkside Drive and Queensville Sideroad, Maple Street, the Cedar Street and Parkside Drive*

subdivision, 2nd Concession between Doane Road and Queensville Sideroad, and the south side of Queensville Sideroad between the 2nd Concession and Yonge Street;

- *posting of the approved park management plan on the Ontario Parks website;*
- *paid advertisement in the Era Banner;*
- *posting of an EBR policy decision notice on the Environmental Registry;*
- *posted notices on site; and*
- *meetings with stakeholder groups and agencies, as required.*

The park management plan will be circulated to people and organizations that directly contributed to the park management planning process. Within the park management plan there will be a summary explanation of the opportunities for public participation and how input was considered.

7.0 PLANNING SCHEDULE SUMMARY

Refer to Appendix B.

8.0 ONTARIO PARKS' STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to preparing the park management plan and its various components, the planning team will be responsible for direct consultation with First Nations, interest groups, municipalities and the general public. Specific staff responsibilities will be as follows:

- Park Superintendent, Sibbald Point and Holland Landing Prairie Provincial Parks, will chair the planning team and provide ongoing assistance to the project by providing information about current operations, facilities, resource management issues and community concerns, and will serve as a liaison to local First Nations, stakeholders and the public.
- Management Planning Specialist, Central Zone, Ontario Parks, will provide specific guidance and advice regarding the Ontario Parks' planning and public consultation process, and will ensure that all EBR, *Environmental Assessment Act* and *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act* and Ontario Parks' policy requirements are fulfilled.
- Assistant Park Planner, Central Zone, Ontario Parks, will conduct research and background information collection and prepare public consultation, communications and planning documents.
- Zone Ecologist, Central Zone, Ontario Parks, will provide input in the areas of ecology, resource management and monitoring.
- Zone Manager, Central Zone, Ontario Parks, will approve final drafts of planning materials.
- Other planning team members and contacts may be assigned various tasks throughout the project.
- District representative, provides input regarding resource management values, activities and policies for areas adjacent to the park.

8.0 BUDGET

Stage 1 – Terms of Reference

Media Notice in Newspapers	\$1000
Direct Mailing	\$300
Terms of Reference Production (in-house)	\$300

Stage 3 – Preliminary Management Plan

Media Notice in Newspapers	\$1000
Direct Mailing	\$400
Plan Production (in-house)	\$300
Open House	\$500

Stage 2 – Approved Management Plan

Media Notice in Newspapers	\$1000
Plan Production	\$800
Direct Mailing of Plan	<u>\$500</u>

TOTAL **\$6100**

APPENDIX A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION REFERENCES

- Environment Canada. 2004. *Canadian Climate Normals 1971-2000*. On-line document. URL: <http://www.climate.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca>. (accessed July 3, 2007)
- Gartner Lee Associates Ltd. 1985. *Study Proposal. Holland Landing Prairie Research*. Prepared for Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.
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- Gould, J. 1988. *A Biological Inventory and Evaluation of the Holland Landing Prairie Relict*. Parks and Recreational Areas Section, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Open File Ecological Report 8804, Central Region, Richmond Hill.
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- Hilditch, T. and D. Cunningham. 1982. *Holland Landing Prairie. A research proposal: rehabilitation of the prairie community within the Holland Landing environmentally significant area*. South Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority.
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- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1997. *Prescribed Burn Planning Manual*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. (available online at: http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/forests/forestdoc/guidelines/pdfs/prescribed_burn.pdf)
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- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2004. *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. (available online at: http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/planning_pdf/class_ea.pdf)

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- Reznicek, A.A. 1980. *John Goldie's 1819 Collecting Site near Lake Simcoe, Ontario*. Canadian Field-Naturalist, 94(4): 439-442.
- Reznicek, A.A. 1983. *Association of relict prairie flora with Indian trails in central Ontario*. In R. Brewer, ed. Proceedings of the eighth North American prairie conference. Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.
- Riley, J.L. 1989. *Distribution and Status of the Vascular Plants of Central Region*. Richmond Hill, Ontario: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreational Areas Section, Open File Ecological Report SR8902, Central Region.
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- The Regional Municipality of York. 2007. *DRAFT York Region: Natural Heritage Discussion Paper*. (available online at: <http://www.york.ca/Publications/Default+Economic+Publications.htm>)
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- Thompson, M. 2005. *Detailed Inventory of Butternut (Juglans cinerea) in 12 Central Ontario Provincial Parks*. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Central Zone Office, Ontario Parks, Huntsville.

APPENDIX B Holland Landing Prairie Park Management Planning Schedule Summary

STAGE IN PLANNING PROCESS	DESCRIPTION	PRODUCT(S)	CONSULTATION/ COMMUNICATIONS	PROPOSED TIMETABLE
1a. Preparation of Invitation to Participate and Approved Terms of Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify scope of the planning program • Schedule • Costs • Responsibilities • Public consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations pre-consultation • Circulation of the approved terms of reference • Electronic posting of the approved terms of reference and Background Information list • Paid advertisements inserted in local newspapers • EBR policy proposal notice posting on the Environmental Registry • Posted notice onsite • Meetings with stakeholder groups, as required 	<p style="text-align: center;">winter 2009</p>
1b. Background Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering and general review of background information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background information file 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations pre-consultation • Circulation of preliminary park management plan • Electronic posting of preliminary park management plan and proposed amendment to land use direction • Paid advertisements inserted in local newspapers • Staffed open house • EBR policy proposal notice update on the Environmental Registry • Posted notice onsite • Meetings with stakeholder groups, as required 	<p style="text-align: center;">Fall 2009</p>
2. Preliminary Park Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content requirements defined by <i>Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary park management plan • Proposed amendment to land use direction (if required) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations pre-consultation • Circulation of the approved park management plan • Electronic posting of the approved park management plan and if applicable approved amendment to land use direction • Paid advertisements inserted in local newspapers • EBR policy decision notice posted on the Environmental Registry • Posted notice onsite • Meetings with stakeholder groups, as required 	<p style="text-align: center;">Winter 2010</p>
3. Approved Park Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content requirements defined by <i>Ontario Provincial Park Management Planning Manual</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved park management plan • Approved amendment to land use direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nations pre-consultation • Circulation of the approved park management plan • Electronic posting of the approved park management plan and if applicable approved amendment to land use direction • Paid advertisements inserted in local newspapers • EBR policy decision notice posted on the Environmental Registry • Posted notice onsite • Meetings with stakeholder groups, as required 	<p style="text-align: center;">Winter 2010</p>