



Little Abitibi

Draft Management Statement Amendment

Invitation to Comment

Ontario Parks has prepared a draft amendment to the Little Abitibi Provincial Park management statement. An amendment to the existing park management statement is required to enable the disposition and use of park lands for a stream flow station proposed by Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Taykwa Tagamou Nation (TTN) and Ontario Power Generation, and for any other related work that may be necessary to assess the feasibility of a water-power facility by TTN and OPG.

You are invited to review and comment on the draft management statement amendment. All comments regarding the draft amendment should be submitted to:

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The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) is collecting your personal information and comments under the authority of Ontario's *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act* (2006). Any personal information you provide (address, name, telephone, etc.) will be protected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (1990); however your comments will become a part of the record of consultation and may be shared with the general public. Your personal information may be used by MNR to send you information about future MNR planning initiatives in the park area. If you have questions about the use of your personal information, please contact the Ontario Parks Northeast Zone Senior Management Planner at (705) 564-3168.

Your participation in planning for this provincial park is appreciated. All comments received will be considered during the preparation of the amendment of Little Abitibi Provincial Park Management Statement.

Reason for Amendment

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Taykwa Tagamou Nation (TTN) and Ontario Power Generation (OPG) are proposing to install a temporary stream flow station (gauge, probe, conduit and trail) in the New Post Creek portion of Little Abitibi Provincial Park (LAPP), downstream of the mouth of Cheena Creek. Once set up, the station would provide real time monitoring of the levels and flows of New Post Creek necessary for the engineering and economic assessment of a potential water-power facility at New Post Creek currently within LAPP.

Background to Amendment

Little Abitibi Provincial Park provides waterway and natural environment class representation in the Lake Abitibi Ecodistrict (3E-1). Located approximately 65 km northeast of Cochrane, this linear park is anchored in the south by a number of large lakes on the Little Abitibi River system, notably Pierre, Montreuil and Harris lakes (Management Statement, 2006 Figure 2). The park follows the Little Abitibi River from the outlet at Harris Lake for approximately 70 km to a diversion dam, constructed in 1963 to divert water into New Post Creek. It then follows a 4 km diversion channel to New Post Creek and 16 km of New Post Creek to the confluence with the Abitibi River. At this point, the park boundary expands to include a portion of the Abitibi River and adjacent land base to protect a significant historical site. The park was regulated in 1985 and encompasses a total area of 20,296 hectares.

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Taykwa Tagamou Nation (TTN), and Ontario Power Generation (OPG) and are proposing to install a stream flow station (e.g., gauge, probe, conduit and trail) in the New Post Creek portion of Little Abitibi Provincial Park (LAPP), downstream of the mouth of Cheena Creek. The project also includes creating a helipad outside of the park on adjacent Crown land. The above details are explained further in the Class EA Project Description – Stream Flow Station In Little Abitibi Provincial Park. Once installed, the flow station would provide real time monitoring of the levels and flows of New Post Creek necessary for the engineering and economic assessment of a potential water-power facility at New Post Creek currently within LAPP.

An amendment to the existing management statement is required to enable the disposition and use of park lands for the stream flow station and for any other related work that may be necessary to assess the feasibility of a water-power facility. Subsequent consultations to consider such a power facility upstream of the stream flow station will be undertaken through a separate process if it is deemed viable to proceed by the proponent. That consultation may include consideration of a deregulation of the specific site and a regulation of suitable replacement lands.

The following provides policy direction as the detail of the proposed amendment of the Little Abitibi Provincial Park Management Statement (2006). The proposed amendment should be read as a supplement or insert to the original management statement. The section headings come from the original management statement with page number references in brackets. The **wording of the proposed amendment is bolded in yellow highlight in the text**. Excerpts from the original texts of the Little Abitibi Management Statement appear as regular text.

Excerpts from Little Abitibi Provincial Park Management Statement (2006)

5.1.6 Land Disposition (p 14)

No new dispositions of Crown land for private use of individuals or corporations are permitted within the park (OMNR 2003), **with the exception of dispositions related to the assessment of a potential water-power facility.**

5.2.1 Water Management (p 15)

The *Abitibi River Water Management Plan* (OPG 2006) governs the waters of the Little Abitibi River.

There is one existing water control structure within Little Abitibi Provincial Park. The New Post Diversion dam was constructed in 1963 to divert the flow of the Little Abitibi River through New Post Creek to the Abitibi River to supply additional generating capacity at the Otter Rapids Generating Station. This facility is now owned and operated by Ontario Power Generation (OPG) under the authority of a crown lease.

A number of environmental concerns have been identified regarding the dam and diversion channel. OPG has committed to address these concerns through the *Abitibi River Water Management Plan* (OPG 2006).

Concerns have also been identified regarding the erosion of the cultural heritage site at New Post on the Abitibi River. Some initial salvage and assessment work was undertaken in 2004, but further work will be required to either protect the site or salvage any significant artifacts before they are lost (Finlayson, 2005). The *Abitibi River Water Management Plan* acknowledges this concern but does not provide any specific direction or commitment to address the problem. The Ministry of Natural Resources, Taykwa Tagamou Nation and OPG will develop a strategy for protection of the site. Currently, this issue has been identified as a “past grievance” which needs to be resolved by OPG and Taykwa Tagamou Nation before anything further can be done. If an agreement is reached, the Ministry of Natural Resources will ensure that any proposed protection or salvage activities meet the requirements of the *Environmental Assessment Act*.

New water control or hydroelectric developments are not permitted within the park (OMNR 1992; OMNR 2000; **Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act 2006**). **Should new developments be identified, a deregulation of the specific site and a regulation of suitable replacement lands will be proposed and the project evaluated in accordance with EA Act.**

10.0 REFERENCES

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