



Little Abitibi

Management Statement Amendment

**Ministry of Natural
Resources**

Office of the Minister

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Dear Sir or Madam:

I am pleased to approve this amendment to the 2006 management statement for Little Abitibi Provincial Park. The amendment provides direction in the management statement to allow for dispositions related to the assessment of a potential water-power facility in Little Abitibi Provincial Park.

I would like to express my appreciation to all those who participated in the planning process.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Donna Cansfield
Ontario Minister of Natural Resources



Date

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.

Statement of Environmental Values

In 2008 the MNR revised its Statement of Environmental Values (SEV) under the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR). The SEV is a document that describes how the purposes of the EBR are to be considered whenever decisions that might significantly affect the environment are made in the Ministry. The Ministry has considered its SEV during the development of this management statement amendment. This document is intended to reflect the direction set out in the SEV and to further the objectives of managing our natural resources on a sustainable basis.

Background to Amendment

This amendment enables 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, should the proponent determine that the power facility is feasible, will be undertaken through a separate process. That consultation may include consideration of a deregulation of the specific site and a regulation of suitable replacement lands.

The proposed amendment was available for inspection and comment from October 20 until November 19, 2008. Consultation included notification through a policy proposal posting on the EBR environmental registry, documents posted on the Ontario Parks website and a broad mail-out. A total of four submissions were received. Three comments supported the proposal and one was neutral. The proposed amendment was not changed as a result of the above input received.

The following provides policy direction as the detail of the amendment of the Little Abitibi Provincial Park Management Statement (2006). The 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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