

**PUZZLE LAKE PROVINCIAL PARK (P4)
(NATURAL ENVIRONMENT)
FACT SHEET**

MAY, 2001

BACKGROUND

On July 16, 1999, the Ontario Government released the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* to guide the planning and management of Crown lands in central and parts of northern Ontario. A major part of the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* was a government intent to establish 378 new protected areas. This commitment marks the biggest expansion of provincial parks and conservation reserves in Ontario's history.

The Puzzle Lake Provincial Park is part of this significant expansion of Ontario's protected areas system. Following public and Aboriginal consultation in late 2000 and early 2001 on refining the boundary of this protected area, Ontario Regulation 951 of the Revised Regulations of Ontario (1990) was amended on April 21, 2001 by Ontario Regulation 85/01 to formally establish this provincial park under the Provincial Parks Act. Ontario Regulation 663/98 of the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act was amended by Ontario Regulation 87/01 to permit hunting within this new provincial park.

The Ministry invited public comment on the proposed boundaries of this protected area from September 11 to October 11, 2000. Site specific information was mailed to a list of potentially interested persons, including nearby landowners, resource users, persons with other rights or tenure (e.g. land use permit, *Mining Act* rights), municipalities and others who may have an interest in the area. Consultation with local First Nation communities also occurred during late 2000 and early 2001. Advertisements inviting public comment were placed in local newspapers. Information was also available on the Ontario Living Legacy website and notices were posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights Environmental Registry website.

Suggested boundary changes and comments on the site were reviewed in detail by the Ministry of Natural Resources. Where suggested revisions were in keeping with the overall direction of the Land Use Strategy, slight changes were made to boundaries.

SIZE AND LOCATION

Puzzle Lake Provincial Park includes 3,724 hectares of Crown Land in Sheffield Township, in the County of Lennox and Addington. The western boundary of the proposed park encompasses a portion of the Puzzle Lake shoreline and the eastern boundary extends to the Sheffield/Hinchinbrooke Township border. This site is in close proximity to the Hamlet of Kaladar.

AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Puzzle Lake Provincial Park supports a diversity of undisturbed upland and wetland habitats within ecological site district 5e-11. It is situated between two other significant natural ecosystems in the area, the Kaladar Jack Pine Barrens and the Mellon Lake Conservation Reserve. The convoluted network of ridges, valleys and twisted shorelines include a tremendous variety of habitats and microclimates from extensive rock barrens, dry deciduous and mixed forests, cliffs of igneous rock supporting ancient cedars, to boggy wetlands and natural shorelines of lakes and rivers.

This site is home to the provincially rare shining sumac and the nationally rare bear oak. The recently discovered bear oak and common juniper rock barren is the first found in Canada. The area supports the highest known number of provincially rare species found in any such area in eastern or southern Ontario: 16 plants, 1 bird, 2 mammals and 12 rare plant communities.

LAND USE INTENT

This area has been regulated under the Provincial Parks Act and will be managed by Ontario Parks as a Natural Environment class provincial park.

Provincial parks protect Ontario's representative natural areas and special landscapes. Parks also provide opportunities for outstanding recreational activities. Most recreational activities (e.g. hiking, skiing, tourism related uses, nature appreciation) that have traditionally been enjoyed in the area will continue, provided that these uses do not impact on the natural features needing protection. Hunting and fishing is permitted within all new provincial parks, except Nature Reserves, created through *Ontario's Living Legacy*.

Commercial timber harvesting, mining, aggregate extraction and commercial hydroelectric development are prohibited in provincial parks. Careful mineral exploration may occur in specific new provincial parks created through *Ontario's Living Legacy*, in areas that have provincially significant mineral potential. If a portion of a new provincial park is to be developed for a mine, it will be removed from the park, and appropriate replacement lands will be placed in regulation.

Consistent with *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* the pre-existing mining claim on this site will be managed as a "Forest Reserve" and not included as part of the regulated conservation reserve area. Policies for forest reserves are similar to those for conservation reserves, except that mining activities are permitted. Should the mining claim be retired in the future through normal processes, the claim area will be added to the conservation reserve.

NEXT STEPS

The next step for this newly regulated provincial park is for Ontario Parks to undertake a Park Management Plan to determine the long term management of this area. The public will be invited to participate in the preparation of management plans. **Please let us know if you would like to be notified directly of this opportunity.** Alternatively, an Interim Management Statement may be prepared to document the known values and uses of the area, and to provide custodial policies for managing the area until a detailed park management plan is prepared.

Planning, management and permitted uses within this provincial park will be consistent with the commitments of the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy*.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For further information on Puzzle Lake Provincial Park, please contact: Jim Peets, Parks Zone Planner, Ontario Parks, South Eastern Zone Office, 51 Heakes Lane, Kingston, Ontario, K7M 9B1, telephone: (613) 531-5722, Fax (613) 531-5722. You may also visit the Ministry's Internet website at www.ontarioslivinglegacy.com for information about *Ontario's Living Legacy*.