

Parks Ontario

Editorial Team: Northeast Regional Office Parks Team

Volume 1/Number 1/May 1995

Norm's Notes:

I would like to welcome all parks staff to Parks Ontario. We have the opportunity to revitalize the provincial parks system over the next few years and I am pleased to have such dedicated, committed staff working with me on the Parks Ontario team.

We are in the early stages of the transition year for Parks Ontario. While we focus on completing over 50 individual transition tasks, we must also manage day-to-day operations in a new administrative structure. Our performance with both these challenges will determine how successful we will be as an enterprise program in 1996.

As we proceed, the interim Parks Ontario Board will be emphasizing an enhanced commitment to our two core businesses, heritage protection and entrepreneurship. The key document guiding the future of Parks Ontario will be the business plan. It will identify our strategic direction and address achieving parks objectives, improving financial health, building workforce excellence and improving customer service.

Team building and open communication will be vital to our success. Team efforts and regular two-way communications with parks staff are high on my list of priorities.

Your support for Parks Ontario will create new opportunities and hope for the best protection, planning, development and management of our provincial parks.

Norm R. Richards, Managing Director

From the Editorial Team

Parks Ontario... a new organization, exploring new approaches to managing Ontario's Provincial Parks, new opportunities, new challenges... One of the challenges is to keep all Parks Ontario staff informed about this exciting

new venture. At the same time, there's lots of interesting, innovative, and imaginative things happening across the entire province... a credit to our people!

This newsletter is one tool Parks Ontario will use to keep our staff informed. It's about what we do, and can be doing, in Parks Ontario. So, in this the inaugural "edition", our thanks to the many contributors from across the province. Our intent is to send out a copy monthly between May and August.

Flock together...

On March 25, 26 and April 1, 2, Presqu'ile hosted the largest interpretive event offered in the Ontario Park System, the Presqu'ile Waterfowl Festival. Over the two weekends 9,900 visitors were treated to the sight of more than 10,000 ducks, geese and swans as they fed and rested on the waters off Presqu'ile Provincial Park. Over 200 volunteers belonging to the Friends of Presqu'ile Park and other groups travelled from as far away as Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto and Guelph to staff viewing stations and help visitors identify the more than twenty species. A waterfowl carving display, children's activity and "Binocular Hospital" sponsored by Bausch and Lomb rounded out activities.

Presqu'ile P.P. Staff

Snakes Alive!! Small Scale Protection

For the last two seasons, staff and volunteers have been working to ensure the protection of one of Killbear's most valuable resources, the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake. To date this has consisted of a continuing Natural Heritage Education campaign and an initial mark-and-recapture study. As a result of this work, and with the help of a visiting Scout troop, one of the park's nature trails was re-routed to ensure the continued protection of a sensitive piece of habitat.

We have gone from working with a half dozen snakes the first year to identifying nesting sites and recording the birth of young.

This summer, a Carleton University research project will track sixteen massasaugas by radiotelemetry to determine how human disturbance affects their activity patterns and habitat use.

The results will have important management implications, as the snakes are now restricted to areas that are increasingly used for recreational purposes. The researchers will also be hosting workshops in the park for neighbouring cottagers and residents to expand efforts to improve the Snake's image. *Killbear P.P. Staff*

Entrepreneurship

The Friends of Charleston Lake Park, established in early 1995, will be operating the park's firewood concession and a bookstore. The Friends have begun fundraising for several research projects.

Charleston Lake P.P. Staff

Killarney P.P. will begin leasing the canoe route racks to area outfitters this year. The money raised will be used to upgrade the trail from the parking area to the racks. *Killarney P.P. Staff*

Parks Ontario Tests New Products

Staff at a number of parks are helping to evaluate new products in 1995.

1. Fireplace Rings: Bass Lake, Arrowhead, Earl Rowe, Mara, Awenda, McRae, Sibbald Pt., Balsam Lake
2. Fireplace Rings: Rushing River, Killbear
3. Group Site Fireplace Rings: Killbear, Awenda, Algonquin
4. Energy Efficiency Program (Ontario Energy Corporation Partnership): Sibbald Point, McRae, Bass Lake, Balsam Lake, Mara, Algonquin
5. Hydro Site Consumption Metering: Bass Lake, Sibbald Pt. *George Scott*

A Snapshot of Some 94/95 Stats!!

- Park Revenues : 17.1 Million (+ 5 %)
- Park Permit Sales: \$16.5 Million (+ 3.6%)
- Misc/Concession: \$622,818 (+ 58.6%)
- Total Visitors: 8,261,878 (- 2.0%)
- 1994/1995 Reservations: 147,894 (+ 13%)

Co-operating Workshop

The 'Trends & Transition' workshop will be held at Pelee National Park, October 27-29. There will be several interesting sessions (An Effective Committee, Marketing Your Organization) with presentations from Norm Richards and the Director of Parks Canada. The cost (workshop, meals and accommodations) should not exceed \$250. For details, contact Gary Forma (705)740-1221.

News from Planning & Research

Yes these folks have gone beyond park user surveys and have some interesting ideas to share. They are planning to keep us informed about new and innovative ideas, perhaps in a regular report or at least in a column in this newsletter. One idea is having a Parks Ontario Home Page on the world wide web of Internet. If you have some thoughts on this or other ideas contact Dan Mulrooney in Peterborough.

From the Park at the TOP

- . Polar Bear is the only seacoast park in Ontario.
- . It is the only park where you can see whales, walruses, seals and polar bears.
- . North America's most southerly permafrost is found in Polar Bear. *Ed*

Economic Impacts

With approximately 8 million people visiting Ontario provincial parks, the operation of the parks system makes a significant contribution to the provincial economy. Although the 1992 provincial park operating and capital budget was \$50.7 million, the Ontario Government recovered 135% through sales and income taxes (\$54.3 million) and revenues (\$14.5 million).

The impact of expenditures associated with provincial parks supported at least 12,000 person-years of employment. The analysis underestimates the full extent of the economic impact since the available data does not include all park-related expenditures (such as purchase of recreational equipment like tents). *Dan Mulrooney*

Frontenac GIS Project