

Subject STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR MANAGEMENT OF ONTARIO CROWN LAND		Policy PL 1.01.01	
Compiled by - Branch Lands & Natural Heritage	Section Lands & Waters	Date Issued February 1993	
Replaces Directive Title	Number	Dated	Page 1 of 9

1.0 **PURPOSE**

To ensure that the development and implementation of policies governing management of Crown land are consistent with the “Strategic Direction for Management of Ontario Crown Land”.

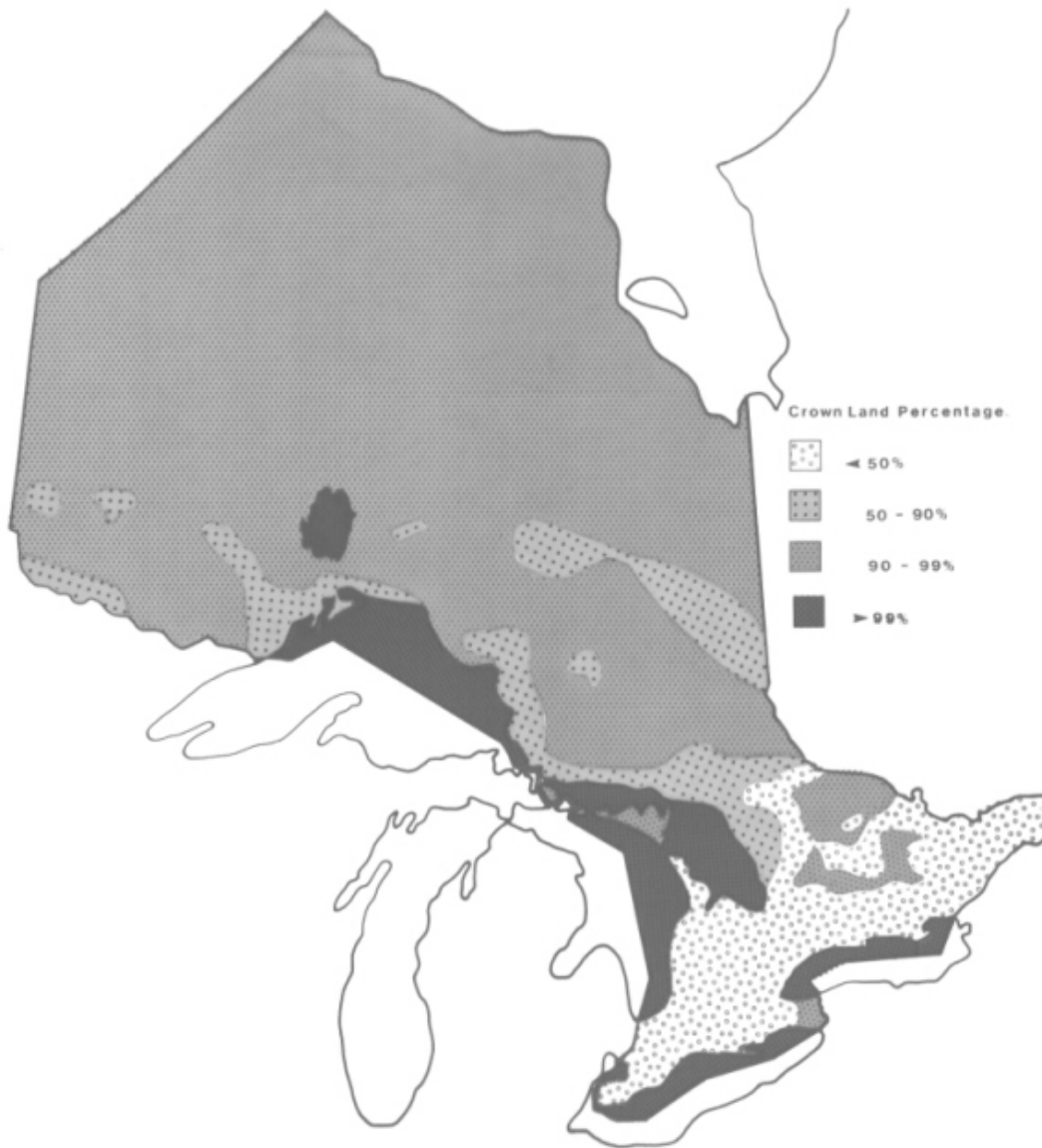
To define the Ministry's land management priorities to reflect MNR's corporate goal and objectives. By focusing the land management role we will make efficient use of fiscal and human resources, and ensure integration of land management with the Ministry's overall resource management scheme.

This document is organized under a series of questions which are used to explain key elements in MNR's approach to Crown Land management. These questions are:

- What is Ontario Crown Land?
- What is Crown Land Management?
- Why is Crown Land management important to the province?
- What is MNR's land management mission?
- What is our goal in managing Crown Land?
- What is MNR's policy on the disposition of Crown Land?
- What basic principles guide MNR in managing Crown Land?
- How do we set about achieving our goal for Crown Land management?

The Strategic Direction statement may be used in several ways, for example:

- A basis for MNR's work planning guidelines, to establish general principles and help managers set general targets.
- Part of the new Land Management Policy Directives Manual, to provide context and direction to all staff involved in Crown Land management.
- A communications tool to explain the nature and importance of Crown Land management to MNR staff, stakeholders and the public.
- In revised form, as a starting point for future public consultation around MNR's Crown Land management.
- A framework for a detailed Strategic Plan for Crown Land management.



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2.0 **POLICY STATEMENT**

MNR staff will give full consideration to principles and objectives outlined in the “Strategic Direction for Management of Ontario Crown Land” when involved in any activity relating to the Ministry’s Crown Land Management role. These direction should be used in conjunction with and integrated appropriately with corporate strategic statements and those governing other Ministry activities.

2.1 **WHY IS CROWN LAND MANAGEMENT IMPORTANT TO THE PROVINCE?**

MNR's management of Crown Land contributes to a better **quality of life** in Ontario in a number of ways.

Preservation of Crown title (legal ownership) facilitates **government control** over land use, which serves to:

- protect both the terrestrial and adjacent aquatic ecosystems
- preserve wilderness, wild life habitat, endangered spaces and species, park land
- ensure access to lands by the public (e.g. for recreation or cultural purposes) and by resource based industries (e.g. forestry, mining, tourism)
- ensure prudent development of natural resources
- protect public health and safety

Responsible stewardship of Crown Land will ensure that Aboriginal people have the continued opportunity to exercise treaty and Aboriginal rights at applicable locations and will allow for greater flexibility in the resolution of land and natural resource issues with Aboriginal people.

Management of the Crown Land asset involves judicious disposition (sale, rental, granting) of rights to some lands for development providing additional **public benefits** including:

- economic growth/diversification for the province and local communities
- social and cultural community development
- revenue to the provincial treasury (currently \$110 million annually)

A major challenge in managing Crown Land lies in achieving an **optimum balance** among these environmental, social, cultural, and economic benefits, both for the present and for future generations.

2.2 **WHAT IS CROWN LAND?**

Crown Land, for the purpose of this document, is defined as those areas of Ontario over which MNR has stewardship responsibility under the authority of the Public Lands Act. These lands make up 87 percent of the province, over 937,000 km², including 164,000 km² under water. The value of this Crown Land asset has been estimated at \$22 billion.

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2.3 WHAT IS CROWN LAND MANAGEMENT?

In the context of this document, Crown Land Management refers to the administration of title to (ownership of) Ontario Crown Lands. Fundamentally, it involves decisions:

- i) to retain Crown title to land, and to ensure effective stewardship of land and land under water (e.g. through work permits); or
- ii) to dispose of Crown Land (e.g. through sale or lease), where appropriate.

These decisions are made in ways which support MNR and Ontario Government objectives, while allowing for regional differences in the Crown Land available and the need to address a wide range of public needs and activities.

(It should be noted that "upland" activities affect adjacent shorelines and land under water. Consequently, the potential to impact water quality and aquatic ecosystems are important considerations in making land use/disposition decisions.)

2.4 WHAT IS MNR's CROWN LAND MANAGEMENT MISSION?

As stewards of the province's Crown Land, MNR and its staff will:

- further the public interest by preserving clear title (legal ownership) of Crown Land which enables us to: safeguard the environment; promote conservation; ensure sustainable use of land through an integrated (terrestrial/aquatic) ecosystem approach to management; and support social and economic development of land where such development is compatible with the environment and other interests;
- answer the needs of our clients, from private citizens and interest groups to corporations and other government agencies, through our commitment to improve on the efficient and responsive delivery of land-related services and information; and
- constantly strive to remain leaders in land management through our dedication to teamwork, integrity and professional competence.

2.5 WHAT IS OUR GOAL IN MANAGING CROWN LAND?

In keeping with the Ministry of Natural Resources' Direction '90s strategic statement, our goal is:

to contribute to the environmental, social and economic well-being of the province by providing for orderly use and sustainable development of Ontario Crown Land.

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2.6 WHAT IS MNR'S POLICY ON THE DISPOSITION OF CROWN LAND?

MNR will favourably consider disposition of Crown Land to accommodate opportunities for socio-economic development that are compatible with environmental and ecological integrity.

When requests for Crown Land are received from individuals, private enterprise or government agencies, the merits of the development initiatives are evaluated along with factors which might warrant the land's restricted use and/or retention by the province. Potential benefits include economic stimulation, employment and community development. Conversely, reasons to deny or limit disposition might include anticipated MNR land needs, projected land requirements of other government agencies, local community interests, compatibility with adjacent land uses, and environmental risks.

2.7 WHAT BASIC PRINCIPLES GUIDE MNR IN MANAGING CROWN LAND?

Underlying MNR's Crown Land management activities are the guiding principles that:

- A healthy natural environment and ecosystem integrity are essential co-requisites to sustainable development and prosperity; they must be regarded as overriding priorities.
- The needs of both present and future generations must be provided for.
- Land is the base for many renewable and non-renewable natural resources and must be "managed" with due regard for all resource objectives, including those for aquatic environments, through an ecosystem approach to stewardship.
- As a limited resource, land has intrinsic value; Crown Land is no less valuable than private land.
- Sound planning is vital; it must be based on the best available information and involve the widest possible range of expertise and perspectives.
- The public, interest groups and stakeholders must be actively involved in Crown Land use planning and decision-making.
- All clients must be treated fairly; principles and processes behind land management decisions must be open and understandable to all.
- Consistent with the "Statement of Political Relationship" (between Aboriginal governments in Ontario and the provincial government, August 1991), management activities must accommodate Crown Land and natural resources co-management arrangements and support Ontario's recognition of the inherent right of First Nations to self-government

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2.8 HOW WILL WE SET ABOUT ACHIEVING OUR GOAL FOR CROWN LAND MANAGEMENT?

Outlined below are eight key objectives for Crown Land management with examples of strategies which may be followed to reach them. Together these approaches define the direction MNR will take in pursuit of our corporate goal for Crown Land Management.

Objective #1: *Promote Environmental Protection*

MNR must encourage land use practices for both terrestrial and aquatic environments which:

- sustain/enhance ecosystems
- protect sensitive land values
- rehabilitate degraded lands

Example Strategies:

- Specify stringent, enforceable environmental conditions for land use and rehabilitation on work permits, tenure documents, etc.
- Ensure the protection of special land values (e.g. parks, ANSIs) by allowing only compatible adjacent land uses.
- Retain influence over disposed lands by granting appropriate tenure, consistent with clients' needs.
- Meet standards for waste and hazardous substance management; work proactively with others to rehabilitate affected lands.

Objective #2: *Maintain Title Integrity*

Crown title to Crown Land must be protected. Failure to maintain title integrity can result in lost revenues to the province, inappropriate land use and environmental degradation.

Example Strategy:

- Act to resolve unauthorized occupations giving priority to situations with significant environmental, revenue or permanent title implications.

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Objective #3: *Improve the Knowledge Base*

Fundamental to all Crown Land management activities is comprehensive and accurate knowledge of the land and water resources, their uses (past and present) and those who occupy/use them. The availability of this information facilitates efforts toward all other objectives. Emphasis will be on automating and integrating information sources.

Example Strategies:

- Bring the Land Index System (LIS), which includes over 650,000 land title and Crown survey records, to operational status in all areas; complete data entry quickly and ensure continued data accuracy and currency.
- Create appropriate data standards for land title/land use information to facilitate continued progress towards data integration and automation.
- Link land title/land use data of a local nature to the LIS.
- Collect data and synthesize information on the economic, social and environmental benefits of current land uses.

Objective #4: *Improve Client Service*

Excellence in serving the public is a goal throughout the Ontario government. Recognizing the limited human resources available, service must be delivered on the basis of rational, realistic standards and priorities. Effective communications are a key element in client service.

Example Strategies:

- Establish selective priorities and standards for delivery of land-related client service based on potential environmental and revenue impacts.
- Provide information on new service priorities and standards for land management activities to all staff, clients and the public.
- Continue to streamline and automate existing procedures for Crown Land administration.
- Expand public education efforts to explain Crown Land management programs and policies.

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Objective #5: ***Increase Non-tax Revenues from Crown Land***

The Crown, representing the people of Ontario, should receive fair compensation when rights to Crown Land are disposed of for private use. As stipulated in Management Board directives, compensation should reflect contemporary market values and program costs.

Example Strategies:

- Act quickly on approved recommendations contained in the report of the Lands and Waters Non-tax Revenue Review Team.
- Implement "user pay" on the basis of full cost recovery, wherever practical, Crown Land transactions and services.
- Implement a "market value" assessment system which will consistently determine the value of parcels of Crown Land prior to their disposition and track trends in land value, region by region. This will be used to set land sale and original rental rates and expedite annual revision of rents.

Objective #6: ***Support Development***

Economic growth and renewal through development and diversification is another Ontario government objective. Identification and promotion of development opportunities on Crown Land can stimulate investment and job creation. Although MNR does not play a lead role in this, our cooperation and input is vital in expediting the identification and land transfer process. Availability of Crown Land can also be important in the social development of communities where appropriate land may be needed to accommodate utilities, institutional facilities and other infrastructure elements.

Example Strategies:

- Establish broad consensus on what constitutes acceptable forms of development based on "sustainable" use plus social, economic and environmental integrity.
- Work with other agencies to create an inventory of Crown Land, identifying those with high development potential.
- Support lead economic development agencies (e.g. MITT, MTR, MNDR) in the marketing of economic development opportunities.
- Work cooperatively with communities and social agencies (e.g. EDU, CSS, MMAH, MCSS, MOH) to support development of needed community services.
- Maintain an access road system consistent with provincial objectives.

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Objective #7: ***Provide Support for Resolution of Aboriginal Issues***

The Ontario government is working to address long-standing issues with Aboriginal people. Central to many of these are land-related concerns such as land title, access to, and revenues from Crown Land. By seeking to resolve these concerns, MNR will contribute to the settlement of a broad range of legal, social, cultural and economic issues. While long term solutions are being pursued through consultation and negotiation, Ontario and affected Aboriginal governments (e.g. Nishnawbe-Aski Nation, 1850 Treaty Council) have agreed to fair and practical interim measures to guide on-going resource management situations.

Example Strategies:

- Further the resolution of outstanding Aboriginal issues (e.g. self-government, land claims, natural resource harvesting rights) through on-going discussion and negotiation. These processes might include development of policies which address Aboriginal land issues and the compilation of a provincial land inventory covering all existing Crown Land commitments.
- Abide by interim measure agreements both in "letter and spirit" as they apply to the management of Crown Land.
- Adopt attitudes and practices which demonstrate knowledge, sensitivity and respect for the positions of Aboriginal peoples.

Objective #8: ***Empower Staff to Develop to their Potential***

To improve client service and program delivery, MNR is committed to a decentralized organization in which staff are empowered to act quickly and independently.

A supportive working environment will continue to promote:

- initiative
- creativity
- self-development
- team values.

Example Strategies:

- Cooperatively identify training and development needs and pursue available opportunities.
- Extend knowledge and awareness through inter-office communication (liaison meetings, newsletters, etc.) around land-related issues.
- Establish a field advisory/mentoring system to facilitate the transfer of "lands" knowledge and experience.
- Use team approach, wherever practical, for land-related projects to expand staff awareness and experience.