

Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve (C142)

Statement of Conservation Interest
February 2003

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
North Bay District

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Conservation Reserve (C142)**

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STATEMENT OF CONSERVATION INTEREST

Executive Summary:

Approved Statement of Conservation Interest for Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve (C142).

The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve has been selected as a site representing exemplary wetland and aquatic communities. This conservation reserve offers an ecological landscape representative of the Southern Boreal Site Region. Furthermore, it contributes a richness of cultural and social values, and fulfills many social requirements both locally and provincially. Further studies are required to identify other possible ecological associations and their significance. This conservation reserve is 1345 hectares in size and falls within the geographic townships of Thistle and McLaren. Highway 64 bisects the central section of this conservation reserve. Temagami River Provincial Park is located adjacent to the western boundary of this conservation reserve.

The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve is one of 378 new protected areas approved through *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* (1999), a strategy aimed in part, at completing Ontario's system of parks and protected areas. The site was regulated under the *Public Lands Act* on January 6, 2001.

Once a conservation reserve is regulated, the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) will complete one of two approved planning documents, either a Statement of Conservation Interest (SCI) or a Resource Management Plan (RMP). Both documents address the administration of landuses and activities that occur within the regulated boundaries of the conservation reserve. The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve experienced no new issues, conflicts, uses and/or proposals beyond those addressed during land use planning for the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy*. As a result, a SCI was completed. For conservation reserves having more complex issues, a RMP would be required.

When considering future permitted uses and/or developments, these must be consistent with the SCI. New uses are evaluated within the context of, but may not be limited to; *Test Of Compatibility*, and appropriate Environmental Assessment (EA) requirements. Other protocols may be developed that address site specific sensitivities to identified features.

The goal of the Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve is to protect natural and heritage features while permitting compatible land use activities.

The purposes of this SCI are to:

- a) Provide background information and identify and describe the values of the Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve; and
- b) Provide guidelines for the management of current and future activities while protecting natural, social, and cultural heritage values.

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During the Lands for Life planning process, the public was widely consulted and provided valuable input into what became *Ontario's Living Legacy* Land Use Strategy (1999). Comments received during that time, and consultation related to the formal *Public Lands Act* regulation of the boundaries of this conservation reserve, were generally supportive of the protection of this area.

This SCI will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Implementation of the SCI will include monitoring activities to ensure adherence to management guidelines. Should significant facility development be considered or complex issues arise requiring additional studies, further management direction or special protection measures, this SCI will be amended or a more detailed RMP will be prepared with full public consultation.

The district will evaluate the significance of any required changes. Minor changes, which do not alter the overall intent of this SCI, may be considered and approved by the District Manager without further public consultation and the SCI will be amended accordingly. In assessing major changes, the need for a more detailed resource management plan (RMP) will first be considered. Where a RMP is not considered necessary or feasible, a major amendment may be considered with public consultation. Such amendments will also be posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) registry. The Regional Director has approval authority for any major amendments for this SCI.

The management and administration of the Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve will be guided by the SCI and administered by the North Bay District MNR, Tomiko Area Supervisor. The SCI governs the lands within the regulated boundary of the Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve; however, to ensure MNR protection objectives are being fully met within the conservation reserve, activities on the surrounding landscape must consider the site's objectives and heritage values. In addition, it is the intent of the SCI to create a public awareness that will promote responsible stewardship of protected areas and their surrounding lands in Ontario. With management partners such as Ontario Parks, industry, local governments, etc., the ministry will be able to pursue and advance sound environmental, economic and social strategies and policies related to the protection of this conservation reserve.

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Approval Statement

I am pleased to approve this Statement of Conservation Interest for the **Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve (C 142)**.

This Statement of Conservation Interest (SCI) will provide guidance for the management of the conservation reserve and the basis for the ongoing monitoring of land use and resource activities. This conservation reserve is one of 378 new protected areas approved through *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy*(1999), a strategy aimed in part, at completing Ontario's system of parks and protected areas.

During the Lands for Life planning process, the public was widely consulted and provided valuable input into what became *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy*(1999). Comments received during that time, and consultation related to the formal *Public Lands Act* regulation of the boundaries of this conservation reserve, were generally supportive of the protection of these areas. Stakeholders who provided comment during the boundary consultation for this site were provided the opportunity to review the draft SCI and their comments were considered in the finalization of this document.

Direction for establishing, planning and managing conservation reserves is defined under the *Public Lands Act* and current policy. "Ontario's network of natural heritage areas has been established to protect and conserve areas representative of the diversity of the natural regions of the province, including species, habitats, features and ecological systems which comprise that natural diversity." (Policy 3.03.05, MNR 1997). The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve offers a landscape with representative life and earth science features, of which the most notable is the exemplary wetland habitats and meandering creek feature found throughout.

The management and administration of the Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve will be guided by this SCI. Although significant changes to the current pattern of land use activities and resource management practices are not envisioned, more intensive recreational activity and/or scientific study and resource management practices may require a change in management direction and potentially amendments to this plan.

The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve will be managed under the direction of the Tomiko Area Supervisor, North Bay District, Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR).

Dave Payne
District Manager Recommendation
For Approval

February 28, 2003
Date

Rob Galloway
Regional Director

May 30, 2003
Date

STATEMENT OF CONSERVATION INTEREST

1.0 Introduction

Ontario boasts a varied and diverse landscape. Many demands are placed on its resources for both social and economic benefit. The value of these resources was recognized as part of the preparation of *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* (1999) for the management of 39 million hectares of Crown lands and waters in a planning area covering 45 % of the province. This strategy is committed to completing Ontario's system for protected areas, recognizing the land use needs of the resource-based tourism industry and enhancing angling, hunting and other Crown land recreation opportunities.

The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve has been selected as a conservation reserve as part of this strategy. The preparation of a Statement of Conservation Interest (SCI) is a means in which to identify the values of this conservation reserve and to set out guidelines for the management of current and future activities while protecting the natural, social and cultural heritage values of the conservation reserve.

This document has been prepared in accordance with MNR's policy for Conservation Reserves (PL 3.03.05). In addition to recognizing a number of existing uses, this SCI provides the opportunity for new uses, which may be considered, provided they meet the *Test of Compatibility*, set out in the MNR policy.

This SCI governs all lands within the regulated boundary of the Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve. MNR recognizes the need to work with other Ministries and/or proponents of adjacent land use activities, to encourage minimizing the potential risk of negative impacts on the conservation reserve. It is recognized that public awareness and public education will play a role in the stewardship of all protected areas and it is essential to pursue and promote sound environmental, economic and social strategies to reinforce the principles of wise stewardship.

2.0 Goal and Objectives

2.1 Goal of the Statement of Conservation Interest

The goals of the Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve SCI are to provide background information, to identify and describe the values of the conservation reserve and provide guidelines for the management of current and future activities while protecting natural, social and cultural heritage values.

2.2 Objectives of the Statement of Conservation Interest

2.2.1 Short Term

- To identify the State of the Resource with respect to natural heritage values and current land use activities for the conservation reserve.
- To manage the conservation reserve to protect the integrity of its natural values via specific guidelines, strategies and prescriptions detailed in this plan.
- To meet planning requirements by designing this SCI document to address the immediate planning and management needs of the conservation reserve.

2.2.2 Long Term

- To establish representative targets (e.g. future forest conditions) and validate the site as a potential scientific benchmark.
- To identify research/client services and marketing strategies.
- To give direction to evaluate future new or economic ventures (i.e. through use of a *Test of Compatibility* evaluation).

3.0 Management Planning

3.1 Planning Context

3.1.1 Planning Area

The planning area for this SCI is the regulatory boundary of the conservation reserve. As noted earlier, planning for other activities on the surrounding landscape must consider the protection objectives and values of the site. Any strategies noted within this plan related to the conservation reserve boundary or beyond, will be presented for consideration within a larger planning context. The forest management planning process is an example of how adjacent land management may consider features within the conservation reserve boundary.

3.1.2 Management Planning Context

Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy (1999) provides the context for planning for protected areas within the system of parks and protected areas. The categorization of land use areas, their associated goals, objectives and permitted uses are reflected in this SCI. Conservation reserves, which are created by regulation under the *Public Lands Act*, are managed by policies and procedures set out in the *Conservation Reserves Policy and Procedure, 1997*.

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The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve was regulated as a conservation reserve on January 6, 2001, by Ontario Regulation 686/00.

When considering future permitted uses and/or development(s), there are established mechanisms in place to evaluate these proposals. These include, but may not be limited to: *Procedural Guideline B - Land Uses - Test of Compatibility* Policy PL 3.03.05 (OMNR 1997); and applicable Environmental Assessment (EA) requirements. Other protocols may be developed that address site specific sensitivities to identified features within the conservation reserve.

Consideration for proposals pertaining to cultural heritage resources may be screened through *Conserving a Future for our Past: Archeology, Land Use Planning & Development in Ontario*, Section 3 (Ministry of Culture, (formerly MCzCR), 1997) and MNR's AOC Descriptions and Prescriptions.

3.2 Planning Process

Once a conservation reserve is regulated, there is a need to determine the level of management planning required to fulfil protection targets. The SCI is a directional document that provides background information, identifies values to be protected and establishes management guidelines for the conservation reserve. The SCI was selected since there were no new issues beyond those addressed during land use planning for *Ontario's Living Legacy* or during consultation prior to site regulation.

The implementation of policy will be the responsibility of the MNR at the district level. Associations with various partners may also be sought to assist in the delivery of the management program for the conservation reserve. It should be noted that the SCI is a working document and it will be necessary to make revisions to it from time to time. If changes are required, they will occur through a standard process of minor or major amendment.

4.0 Background Information

4.1 Location and Site Description

4.1.1 Location

The following table describes the location and provides administrative details of the conservation reserve:

HOLDRIDGE CREEK CONSERVATION RESERVE

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Name	(C142) Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve
OMNR Administrative Region/District/Area	Northeast/North Bay/Tomiko
Total Area	1345 ha
Townships	Thistle, McLaren
Site Region- Site District (Hills, 1959)	5E-6
Land Ownership	100% Crown Land
Topographic Maps	31 L/12 Marten Lake
Ontario Base Maps	2017 5800 51600, 5800 51700
Latitude	46° 41' N
Longitude	79° 56' E
UTM Coordinates	5171500 N 581500 E
First Nations	Teme-AugamaAnishnabai(TAA), Nipissing First Nation (NFN)
WMU	41
Regulation Date	January 6, 2001 O. Reg 686/00
General	Site is bisected by Highway 64

4.1.2 Site Description

4.1.2.1 Physical Description

The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve is a 1345 ha parcel of Crown land located at the northern edge of site district 5E-6, west of Marten River and adjacent to Temagami River Provincial Park. It is located within the geographic townships of Thistle and McLaren.

The conservation reserve can be accessed from highway 64, which bisects the central section on Holdridge Creek. Entrance can also be obtained via boat access points on Red Cedar Lake, which is connected to the creek.

This conservation reserve is comprised of a large and extensive network of provincially significant wetland habitats, including marshes and swamps. These wetlands are flanked by hills of semi-open deciduous forests dominated by red maple, red oak and aspen, or mixed forests of white birch, black spruce, balsam fir, large-toothed aspen and remnant white pine. Holdridge Creek represents an excellent example of a well-developed meandering watercourse, exhibiting numerous oxbows and dendritic tributary channels (E. Morris, 2001).

Within the wetland complex of this conservation reserve, an extensive cattail marsh can be found between Campten Bay of Red Cedar Lake and a wider bay of Holdridge Creek. The marsh covers approximately 124 ha and contains stands of aquatic plants, cattail and sedge marsh, and floating fen. Small upland

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islands with white spruce, balsam fir, white birch, black spruce and white pine are also present in the area.

Overall, the conservation reserve contains at least 13 different plant communities, which includes a red oak and white pine forest growing on rock outcrops. This presence is considered unique in site district 5E-6 (Bergsma, 1997).

4.2 Administrative Description

The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve was passed into regulation on January 6, 2001 (O. Reg 686/00).

4.3 Inventories

The following table indicates what survey work has been done within the conservation reserve and what is required:

Survey Level	Reconnaissance	Detailed	Future Requirements
Life Science	Morris, Edward. Life Science Checksheet, December 6, 2001. Bergsma, Bonnie M. Gap Analysis and Candidate Area Selection for Life Science Representation in Site District 5E-6, December 6, 1994.		
Earth Science	Kor, Phil Earth Science Inventory Checklist- Draft Notes, July 24, 2002.		Field reconnaissance survey required to provide more detailed feature information.
Recreational	Hewitson, Susan, Recreational Inventory Checksheet, 2002.		

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Map Resources	MNR Map Series: Location Map, Recreational Values Map, Tenure Map, Forest Values Map, Fish & Wildlife Values Map, Commercial Activities Map, Cultural Heritage Values Map, January 2002. MNR, <i>Ontario's Living Legacy</i> – Land Use Strategy, July 1999, Queen's Printer.		
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5.0 State of the Resource

5.1Representation

The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve exhibits a range of wetland habitat types, including marshes, swamps and fens. These wetlands are associated with the meandering channels of Holdridge Creek and its connection to Red Cedar Lake. As mentioned previously, the features within this conservation reserve are identified as provincially significant.

There are 13 different plant communities represented in this conservation reserve, including the red oak and white pine forest growing on rock outcrops unique to the site district (5E-6).

The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve occurs in an area of end moraine and outwash plain. Bergsma, 1997 describes the dominant biophysiographic unit as being moderately broken shallow sandy till over bedrock. This is surrounded by organic terrain over lacustrine deposits of sand, silt and clay. Wetland topography is generally low with relief broken by rock knob outcrops.

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5.1.1 Quality of the Representation

The quality of the representation or the current characteristics of the natural features found within a conservation reserve are as important as the overall representative features that are being protected. A number of factors are considered in evaluating the quality of a conservation reserve's representative features. They include diversity, condition, ecological factors, special features and current land use activities.

(a) Diversity

The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve contains a good diversity of open marsh, riparian marsh and swamp, and mature upland forested habitats. As mentioned previously, a minimum of 13 plant communities can be found within this area. The diversity level is reflected by the number of furbearer and waterfowl species supported by the existing habitats. A previous field survey indicated a minimum of 7 species of ducks present within the area (October). High concentrations of Hooded Merganser, Mallard, Black Duck, Lesser Scaup, Ring-necked duck, Wood Duck and Common Goldeneye were observed. In addition other wetland species such as Black-bellied Plover, Pectoral Sandpiper, Greater Yellow-Legs and Water Pipit were recorded (Bergsma, 1997).

(b) Condition

The wetland communities within this unit are in excellent condition. Also, the upland forests found southeast of the large marsh area show little signs of disturbance. Highway 64 bisects the conservation reserve and provides easy access into the area. A number of buildings (Mountain Lodge) occur immediately west of the north side of the bridge which crosses Holdridge Creek. Additionally, several hunt cabins can be found in the vicinity of this conservation reserve.

A seasonal road forms the northern boundary of this conservation reserve. However, a recent field reconnaissance survey by Roberts, 2002 indicated that the route found on the western side of Highway 64 provides ATV access at best. The route running east of the highway is easily travelled by vehicle. There has also been some recent forest harvesting activity in the forests north and south of the creek, including some clear cutting. A hydro corridor and a trail cross the eastern portion of this unit. Despite containing some disturbances within and adjacent, the conservation reserve and its core values remain relatively undisturbed.

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(c) Ecological Factors

The design of this conservation reserve has utilized a number of existing roads in its design. Coupled with the fact that Highway 64 bisects the central portion, this conservation reserve may be vulnerable to potential overuse. As a result, there is limited protection of core values. Considerations in large landscape planning will have to occur to ensure that values are protected along the conservation reserves sensitive boundaries. The wetlands within this conservation reserve represent sensitive core values and are an important headwater of Red Cedar Lake and the Temagami River system. This extensive system also represents important breeding areas for some fish and waterfowl species. Additionally, it is an important stopover for migrating waterfowl and other marsh birds (Morris, 2001).

(d) Special Features

The special features associated with this wetland are related to the wildlife concentrations. The open cattail marsh, significant for its location and size, is very important for waterfowl breeding, staging and migration. The riparian wetland is important habitat for moose and bear in addition to otter, mink, marten, fisher and beaver. There is a walleye spawning site on Holdridge Creek and baitfish are commercially harvested. The area holds a high degree of recreational significance.

(e) Current Land Use Activities

The location of this conservation reserve, in relation to surrounding roads, allows for easy access for potential users. Activities that are known to occur include hunting, trapping, fishing and canoeing.

The conservation reserve is included within three bear management areas (NB-41-37, NB-41-31, NB-41-28), and is accessible for this species as well as for other sport hunting permitted on Crown land (moose, waterfowl, etc.). Four registered traplines also encompass the conservation reserve in varying degrees. These include NB-07, NB-08, NB-14, NB-15. Additionally, the conservation reserve is located within a baitfish harvest area.

None of the land use activities have notable impacts on the internal values of the conservation reserve.

There are no mining, timber harvesting, aggregate extraction or utility activities within the conservation reserve. However, these activities are known to occur within adjacent lands.

(f) Summary

The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve contains a good diversity of vegetative communities. The wetland habitats comprise the majority of these communities as they represent a provincially significant system, which hold exceptional life science values. The conservation reserve contains little human disturbance and is host to generally low impact recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping and canoeing. The area also contains some cultural heritage value, given that Holdridge Creek was a historical travel route for the Teme-Augama-Anishnabi (TAA).

5.2 Social/Economic Interest in the Area

(a) Linkage to Local Communities

The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve consists entirely of Crown land. Its location in relation to surrounding road systems (mainly Hwy. 64) provides easy access to users engaging in hunting, trapping, baitfish harvesting, angling and canoeing. This access, coupled with the exceptional wetland values within, provides this conservation reserve with a strong potential for educational and nature appreciation pursuits.

(b) Heritage Estate Contributions

The Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve contributes to the province's parks and protected areas system through its regulation, representation and the long-term management of its natural heritage values.

By allocating these lands to the parks and protected areas system through regulation, the province has ensured a certain level of permanence by distinguishing the conservation reserve and its values from the larger general use or more extensively managed landscape. In addition, the conservation reserve's natural features are, and will be available for present and future generations to enjoy and explore.

The conservation reserve's ecological features make a number of contributions to the province's natural heritage estate. Its wetland habitats and surrounding forests contribute significantly to the provincial parks and protected areas system.

Long-term management must consider public access to the conservation reserve and its protection objectives. Future managers will have to balance between maintaining the quality of the current representation and the needs of recreational and other users.

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(c) Aboriginal Groups

All Aboriginal and treaty rights will continue to be respected throughout the management of this SCI. Any future proposal(s) and or decision(s) that have potential impact(s) on the individual aboriginal values and or communities will involve additional consultation with the affected aboriginal groups.

(d) Mining Industry

There are no known current mining interests related to the conservation reserve. Mining and surface rights have been withdrawn from staking within the conservation reserve's boundaries under the *Mining Act* (RSO 1990 Chapter M.14).

There is currently a great deal of mining land to the north and northeast of the conservation reserve. Some of the mining claims share the boundary with the conservation reserve. This is an extremely active area of mineral exploration and results from this area have been extremely encouraging to the mineral sector.

(e) Forest Management

No commercial forest harvesting is permitted in conservation reserves nor are personal use permits issued for wood harvesting. Commercial harvesting is permitted in adjacent areas, which form part of the Nipissing Forest Management Plan. Harvesting activities are subject to work plans approved by the Ministry of Natural Resources within prescribed harvesting practices.

(f) Utilities

A portion of the Trans Canada Pipeline can be found running immediately adjacent to highway 64. This line crosses through the central portion of the conservation reserve. Additionally, a transmission line crosses the conservation reserve northeast of Kidney Lake.

5.3 Natural Heritage Stewardship

Analysis of vegetative communities found within this conservation reserve show that a minimum of 13 exist, dominated mostly by those which are wetland in nature.

There has been no widespread disturbance due to forest harvesting, insect, wind throw, wildlife damage, ice storms or other natural disturbances.

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5.4 Fisheries and Wildlife

There have been no detailed wildlife studies undertaken within the conservation reserve, with the exception of some values monitoring. The importance of the conservation reserve to wildlife species has yet to be determined, particularly for those species, and habitats thereof, that may be vulnerable, threatened or endangered. However, this conservation reserve provides ideal permanent and seasonal habitat for a number of furbearers, waterfowl and other species.

Should any vulnerable, threatened or endangered (VTE) wildlife and/or plant species be identified within or adjacent to the conservation reserve, their value will be protected. Although the species may be identified as residing within the site, their location will remain undisclosed.

5.5 Cultural Heritage Stewardship

There are no archeological sites identified within the conservation reserve.

5.6 Land Use/Existing Development

There are no permanent buildings within the boundaries of the conservation reserve. Two resort lodges and two private cottages are located adjacent to the central portion of the conservation reserve, along highway 64. No other developments are present within or adjacent to the conservation reserve boundary.

5.7 Commercial Use

Present non-industrial commercial uses include trapping, baitfish harvesting and bear management areas.

5.8 Tourism/Recreation Use/Opportunities

Recreational activities such as hunting, trapping and angling occur within the conservation reserve. Two adjacent tourist lodges utilize this area to support their operations.

Access is gained easily off of Highway 64, which bisects the conservation reserve. Tertiary roads form much of the northern boundary of the conservation reserve and provide access to eastern and western extremities. Water access is also gained via Red Cedar Lake, which is connected to Holdridge Creek.

5.9 Client Services

Presently, client services include district responses to public inquiries. No formal information or interpretive facilities currently exist within the conservation reserve. There are fact sheets available to the public, which summarize information for this conservation reserve.

6.0 Management Guidelines

6.1 Management Planning Strategies

The land use intent outlined in *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* (1999) provides context and direction to land use, resource management, and operational planning activities on Crown land. Commitments identified in the above strategy and current legislation (Policy 3.03.05 *PLA*) will form the basis for land use within the Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve. Management strategies for these uses must consider the short and long-term objectives for the conservation reserve. For up to date information on permitted uses refer to the Crown Land Use Atlas.

The conservation reserve will be managed by allowing natural ecosystems and associated processes to occur naturally, with minimal human interference.

Proposed uses and development will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. A *Test of Compatibility*, (Procedural Guideline B - Land Uses (PI 3.03.05) must be passed before they are deemed acceptable. The emphasis will be on ensuring that the natural values of the conservation reserve are not negatively affected by current or future land use activities. Therefore, any application for new specific uses will be carefully studied and reviewed. The Ministry, partner organizations and/or proponents may undertake such studies.

6.2 State of the Resource Management Strategies

Administrative responsibility for the Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve lies with the MNR's North Bay District, Tomiko Area Supervisor. Implementation of this SCI will primarily involve monitoring activities to ensure adherence to the management guidelines. The following management strategies have been created to achieve the goals and objectives stated earlier in this directional document:

Social/Economic

- The management direction will allow for the ongoing economic benefits derived from bear management, baitfish harvesting and trap line activities,

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which may occur in the conservation reserve.

- Educational opportunities may be developed and encouraged in order to create awareness of natural systems in the area.

Natural Heritage Stewardship

- MNR recognizes the need for forest fire disturbance to maintain certain types of ecosystems. These accepted disturbances are part of the life regeneration cycle of our natural forested landscape.
- The principles of sensitive “Light on Land” fire suppression techniques will be practiced, where possible, in the Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve. Fire response initiatives can include full, modified and monitored response depending on the anticipated fire impacts on the site, adjacent property, local infrastructure and the protected resource.
- Fire Management Plans, will be developed for specific conservation reserves, where the use of fire is required to ensure the long-term health and viability of the protected area. Detailed conservation reserve “Fire Management Plans” will be considered when the Provincial Forest Fire Management Strategy is approved.
- Prescribed burning will be conducted only under the direction of the provincial fire strategy and authorized for the conservation reserve under a separate vegetative management plan. Prescribed burning may be utilized if deemed necessary to emulate natural disturbances and renew forest communities, prepare seed beds for research and/or education purposes or to meet additional objectives determined within a separate vegetative management plan.
- With the exceptions of fire suppression and selected forest pest and disease control, the management intent for the Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve is to allow for natural ecosystems, processes and features to operate undisturbed with minimal human interference while providing educational, research and recreational activities.
- All earth and life science features will be protected by defining compatible uses, enforcing regulations and monitoring and mitigating the impacts of land use activities.
- Permits for fuel-wood will not be issued.
- Other activities that do not pass a *Test of Compatibility* will be prohibited (MNR Policy 3.03.05, 1997).
- The introduction of exotic and/or invasive species will not be permitted.
- Programs may be developed to control forest insects and diseases where there is a concern that significant values may be compromised. Remedies must focus on the outbreak or infestation. Biological or non-intrusive solutions should be applied wherever possible.

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- The collection/removal of vegetation and parts thereof will not be permitted; however, subject to a *Test of Compatibility*, the Area Supervisor may authorize the collection of plants and/or parts for purposes of rehabilitating degrade sites within the conservation reserve, collecting seeds for maintaining genetic stock and/or research.
- Detailed ecological surveys concerning vegetation, notably wetland habitats are warranted to achieve a better understanding of the area's existing conditions and biodiversity.
- Research, education and interpretation will be encouraged to provide a better understanding of the management and protection of the natural heritage values and will be fostered through local and regional natural heritage programs, initiatives and partnerships.

Fisheries and Wildlife

- Fish and wildlife resources will continue to be managed in accordance with policies and regulations prevailing in the area and under the direction of the Tomiko Area Supervisor. Provincial legislation and policy will dictate management and enforcement objectives for this area.
- The management direction will endeavour to verify wildlife species present, ecological functions and habitat requirements,
- First Nation Treaty rights will be respected (see Aboriginal Interests).
- Sport hunting will be permitted within the conservation reserve.
- The recovery of threatened or damaged ecosystems will occur whenever possible (maintain biodiversity).

Cultural Heritage

- Recognition will be given to the cultural value of Holdridge Creek as a historic travel corridor.

Land Use/Existing Development

- The management direction is to provide for land use activities, which complement and support educational and conservation objectives.
- Existing land uses and development within the conservation reserve that conflict with the protection objectives (*Test of Compatibility*) will be identified and discontinued if impacts can't be mitigated.

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Commercial Use

- Existing non-industrial commercial uses such as trapping, baitfish harvesting and the operation of bear management areas will be permitted. Such activities will continue to be monitored in order to ensure they do not deplete natural resources and that they impose a minimal impact on the features identified for protection.
- There are no known current mining interests related to the conservation reserve. Mining and surface rights have been withdrawn from staking within the conservation reserve's boundaries under the *Mining Act* (RSO 1990 Chapter M.14).
- Industrial activities such as commercial timber harvesting, prospecting, mining, hydro generation, new utility, transportation corridors and MNR resource roads will not be permitted within the conservation reserve.
- New trap line cabins will not be permitted.
- Commercial enterprises offering ecotourism experiences will be considered providing these activities are low in intensity and are compatible with other uses.

Aboriginal Interests

- Aboriginal treaty rights will continue to be respected throughout the management of this SCI. Any future proposal(s) and or decision(s) that have potential impact(s) on individual aboriginal values and/or communities will involve additional consultation with the affected aboriginal groups.

Tourism/Recreation

- The earth and life science features and their protection shall be the overall theme for tourism.
- Non-trail snowmobiling or ATV use may be permitted for retrieval of game only.
- Conflict resolution between recreational uses will be undertaken, where necessary and with input from relevant user groups.

Client Services

- Information regarding the Holdridge Creek Conservation Reserve may be delivered from different sources, however, MNR will be the lead agency for responding to inquiries regarding access permitted and restricted activities, values and recreation opportunities.

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- A management agreement may be pursued with an appropriate partner to share responsibilities for information services and the delivery of other aspects of this SCI.

6.3 Specific Feature/Area/Zone Management Strategies

Over the long term, management of the provincially significant wetland habitats may be enhanced through undertaking more specific inventories and developing vegetative management plans.

6.4 Promote Inventory, Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting (IMAR)

The easy accessibility and size of this conservation reserve provides a good range of opportunity within. Since there has been relatively little human disturbance in most parts of the conservation reserve, some features may be observed in a pristine state. Non-destructive research will be promoted as an asset for procuring an understanding of the natural features and ecological functions of the conservation reserve and their comparative value to other conservation reserves and/or to landforms bordering the conservation reserve.

6.5 Implementation and Plan Review Strategies

This SCI will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Implementation of the SCI will include the monitoring of activities to ensure adherence to management guidelines.

Implementation of the SCI and management of the conservation reserve are the responsibility of the Tomiko Area Supervisor of MNR (North Bay). Partnerships may be pursued to address management needs. If changes in management direction are needed at any time, the significance of the changes will be evaluated. Minor changes, which do not alter the overall intent of the SCI, may be considered and approved by the District Manager (North Bay) without further public consultation and the SCI will be amended accordingly.

In assessing major changes, the need for a more detailed resource management plan (RMP) will be considered. Where a RMP is not considered necessary or feasible, a major amendment may be considered with public consultation. Such amendments will also be posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) registry. The Regional Director has approval authority for any major amendments to this SCI.

6.6 Marketing Strategies

Messages should focus on the area's natural heritage features representation, recreation opportunities, nature appreciation and education.

STATEMENT OF CONSERVATION INTEREST

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Appendix A.

PROCEDURAL GUIDELINE B – LANDUSES – TEST OF COMPATIBILITY

Public Lands Act Policy PL 3.03.05 (procedure 3.03.05)

The Conservation Reserve policy provides broad direction with regard to the permitted uses. The policy provides **only an indication** of the variety of uses that will be considered acceptable in Conservation Reserves. The only caution is that **“any new uses, and commercial activities associated with them will be considered on a case by case basis, they must pass a test of compatibility to be acceptable”**. What does a “test of compatibility” mean?

An examination of this must start from the premise of why an area is set aside – specifically, its representative natural heritage values. Criteria are then identified to guide compatibility considerations. These criteria apply to the long term acceptability of both existing uses and new uses.

1. **Conformity to SCI:** SCI describe values for which an area has been set aside and the range of appropriate uses that will be permitted in the area. SCI may also speak to the acceptability of other “new” uses currently not occurring in the area.

The first “test” is: “do proposed new land uses and/or commercial activities conform to the direction of the SCI for the Conservation Reserve? Would the new use(s) depart from the spirit of appropriate indicator land uses in the SCI?”

2. **Impact Assessment:** If the proposed use(s) pass test one it is important to determine their impact on the area before they are approved. This should include the following:
 - Impact on **natural heritage values**: “will the new use(s) impact any natural values in the area? If so, how and to what degree? Is it tolerable?”
 - Impact on **cultural values**: “will the new use(s) impact any historical or archaeological values in the area?”
 - Impact on **research activities**: “will the new use(s) affect any research activities in the area?”
 - Impact on **current uses**: “will the new use(s) have any negative impact on the array of current uses?”

STATEMENT OF CONSERVATION INTEREST

- Impact on **area administration**: “will the new use(s) increase administrative costs and/or complexity?” (For example, the cost of area monitoring, security and enforcement).
- Impact of **accommodating the use outside** the Conservation Reserve: “Could the use(s) be accommodated as well or better outside the Conservation Reserve?”
- Impact on **socio-economics of the area**: “will the use(s) affect the community(ies) surrounding the area in a positive or negative way?” (for example, will the new use make the area less remote thereby affecting a local tourism industry that is dependant on the area’s remoteness for its appeal)?
- Impact on **area accessibility**: “does the new use(s) give someone exclusive rights to the area or a portion of the area to the exclusion of other existing uses?”

Appendix B.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Biodiversity: The total variability of life on Earth, including the diversity of genes, species and ecosystems.

Boreal: One of 3 main forest zones in the world. It is located in northern regions and is characterized by the predominance of conifers.

Esker: A knobby, crooked ridge of coarse gravel and sand considered to be deposited by meltwater in crevasses and tunnels near the front of a glacier.

Fen: peatland with water table at or above the surface with very slow water movement through communities via seepage that results in a more mineral, nutrient and oxygen-rich environment than bogs. Generally fens contain peat accumulations greater than 40 cm deep. Sometimes floating mat with sedges, mosses, shrubs and sparse tree layer present. Indicator plants include; Larch (*Larix laricina*) and Eastern White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) over Black Spruce (*Picea mariana*) , Speckled Alder (*Alnus incana*), Dwarf Birch (*Betula pumila*) , Bluejoint Grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), assorted sedges, Sweet Gale (*Myrica gale*) with ericaceous shrubs present – especially in more nutrient poor fens (Harris *et al.* 1996).

Glaciofluvial: Silt, sand and gravel deposits from meltwaters of a glacier.

IMAR: An integrated, ministry-wide framework for Inventory, Monitoring, Assessment, and Reporting that supports the management of our natural resources in an ecologically sustainable way.

Kame: A knobby hill of irregularly stratified sand and gravel, formed at the edge of a melting glacier.

Moraine: A knobby ridge either of (a) boulder clay built by a thrust of a glacier or of (b) gravel and sand deposited at the edge of a glacier by escaping meltwater.

Poor fen wetlands generally contain greater amounts of black spruce than cedar and larch as well as ericaceous shrubs and sphagnum or peat mosses.

Appendix C.
ONTARIO'S LIVING LEGACY (OLL) CONSERVATION RESERVE
PERMITTED USE TABLE

Table 4: Summary of Permitted Uses in Conservation Reserves
within the Planning Area

Use		<u>Existing</u> Conservation Reserves		<u>New</u> Conservation Reserves in the Planning Area
Commercial timber harvest, commercial hydro development		NOT permitted.		NOT permitted.
Mineral exploration and mining		NOT permitted.		NOT permitted.
Bait fishing, commercial fishing commercial fur harvesting, wild-rice harvesting		Existing use permitted to continue, unless there are significant demonstrated conflicts. New operations can be considered subject to the " <i>Test of Compatibility</i> "		Existing use permitted to continue, unless there are significant demonstrated conflicts. New operations can be considered subject to the " <i>Test of Compatibility</i> "
Sport hunting		Permitted.		Permitted.
Sport fishing		Permitted, except in specific fish sanctuaries		Permitted, except in specific fish sanctuaries
Seasonal recreation camps "hunt camps"		Existing camps permitted to continue, and may be eligible for enhanced tenure, but not purchase of land (see 6.1.8).		Existing authorized camps, permitted to continue, and may be eligible for enhanced tenure but not purchase of land (see 6.1.8).
Commercial Bear Hunting		Existing use permitted to continue. New operations not permitted.		Existing use permitted to continue. New operations not permitted.

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HOLDRIDGE CREEK CONSERVATION RESERVE**STATEMENT OF CONSERVATION INTEREST****Continued Permitted Uses in OLL Conservation Reserves**

Tourism facilities (for resource based tourism) and recreational Trails		Existing authorized facilities and trails can continue, unless there are significant demonstrated conflicts. No new tourism facilities permitted. New trails can be considered as part of planning for an individual reserve.		Existing authorized facilities and trails (motorized and non-motorized) can continue, unless there are significant demonstrated conflicts. Tourism facilities can apply to upgrade tenure from LUP to lease. New tourism and trails facilities can be considered as part of planning for an individual reserve.
Land Disposition		Sale of land is not permitted. Renewals of existing leases or land use permits are permitted; requests for transfer of tenure will be considered in the context of a Statement of Conservation Interest (SCI) or a Resource Management Plan (RMP). New leases or land use permits permitted for approval activities.		Sale of land is not permitted. Renewals of existing leases or land use permits are permitted; requests for transfer of tenure will be considered in the context of a Statement of Conservation Interest (SCI) or a Resource Management Plan (RMP). New leases or land use permits permitted for approval activities.
Roads		Existing roads can continue to be used, but new roads for resource extraction will not be permitted.		Existing roads can continue to be used, but new roads for resource extraction will not be permitted,

This table is from the 1999 Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy, page 24.

The Public Lands Act, specifically, Conservation Reserve Policy PL 3.03.05 and the Crown Land Use Atlas govern uses and management activities not listed in this permitted use table.

HOLDRIDGE CREEK CONSERVATION RESERVE

STATEMENT OF CONSERVATION INTEREST

Appendix D.

PUBLIC LANDS ACT POLICY (3.03.05) CONSERVATION RESERVE PERMITTED USE TABLE

Indicator Uses for Conservation Reserves

Permitted Activities Holdridge Creek (C142)	Generic			(C142) Specific
	(Y=Yes, N= No, M= Maybe)			
	Existing	New		
RECREATION				
Sport fishing	Y	Y		Y
Sport hunting	Y	Y		Y
Food gathering	Y	Y		Y
Facility infrastructure	M	M		M ¹
Non-trail snowmobiling	M ¹	M ¹		M ²
Non-trail ATV use	M ¹	M ¹		M ²
Rock climbing/caving	M	M		N/A
Canoeing/kayaking	Y	Y		Y
Motorized boating	Y	Y		Y
Picnicking	Y	Y		Y
Camping	M	M		Y
Trails	Y	M		M ¹
Hiking	Y	M		M ¹
X county skiing	Y	M		M ¹
Cycling	Y	M		M ¹
Horse riding	Y	M		M ¹
Snowmobiling	Y	M		M ¹
M¹= New uses will be considered on a case by case basis provided they do not impact the natural heritage values for which the area was established, and must pass a test of compatibility to be acceptable. M²= For retrieval of game only				
SCIENCE, EDUCATION & HERITAGE APPRECIATION				
Research	Y	Y		Y
General walking	Y	Y		Y
Photography and painting	Y	Y		Y
Wildlife viewing	Y	Y		Y
Outdoor education/interpretation	Y	Y		Y
Collecting	N	N		N

HOLDRIDGE CREEK CONSERVATION RESERVE

STATEMENT OF CONSERVATION INTEREST

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

Food harvesting	M	M		N
Fishing	M	M		N
Baitfish harvesting	Y ¹	M		Y
Trapping	Y ¹	M		Y
Trap cabins	Y	N		N
Resort-outpost camp	Y ¹	N		N
Outfitting-bear management	Y ¹	N		Y
Wild rice harvesting	Y	M		M

Y¹= Transfer requests will be considered in the context of a Statement of Conservation Interest (SCI) or Resource Management Plan (RMP) for each conservation reserve.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Inventory monitoring	Y	Y		Y
Featured species management	M	M		M
Natural systems management	M	M		M

INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITIES

Timber harvesting	N	N		N
Prospecting	N	N		N
Mining	N	N		N
Hydro generation	N	N		N
Energy transmission corridors	Y	N		N
Communications corridors	Y	N		N
Transport corridors	Y	N		N
Resource roads (MNR)	Y	N		N
Land disposition	*	N		N
Hunt camps	Y ¹	N		N

*=Existing dispositions will continue, however, as opportunities arise the Ministry will acquire and/or remove them outside of the conservation reserve.

Y¹= Transfer requests will be considered in the context of a Statement of Conservation Interest (SCI) or Resource Management Plan (RMP) for each conservation reserve.