

**THE SHOALS
PROVINCIAL PARK**

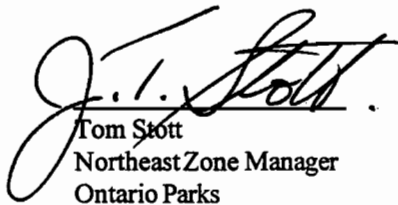
**INTERIM
MANAGEMENT
STATEMENT**

APPROVAL STATEMENT

This Interim Management Statement will provide interim direction for the management of **The Shoals Provincial Park** until a comprehensive Park Management Plan is prepared.

This statement will provide the basis for the subsequent preparation of the Park Management Plan.

I am pleased to approve this Interim Management Statement for The Shoals Provincial Park.


Tom Stott
Northeast Zone Manager
Ontario Parks

99-03-16
Date

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name:	The Shoals
Classification:	Natural Environment
Site Region/Site District: Chapleau	3E 5
OMNR Administrative Region/District:	Northeast/Chapleau
TOTAL AREA (ha):	10 644
Regulation Date:	1971

TARGETS

EARTH SCIENCE REPRESENTATION

geological theme	feature
Transition zone between Kapuskasing, Abitibi and Wawa Subprovinces.	Sand plains; boggy lowlands developed from postglacial Lake Sultan; eskers & esker complexes; glacial melt water delta.

LIFE SCIENCE REPRESENTATION

site type/landscape unit	species/communities
Southern margin Boreal Forest Region-transition zone Missinaibi-Cabongasection.	28 Vegetation communities; Balsam Fir, Black Spruce, White Birch; Marshes are considered most significant.

CULTURAL RESOURCE REPRESENTATION

theme	theme segment
The Forest Industry and Forest Industry Communities.	Rise and Fall of A Resources Oriented Town; The Lumbering Era.

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

day use	car camping	wilderness/interior
4000	3870	6000

INVENTORIES

level/type	reconnaissance/ completion date	detailed completion date	required?
earth science	1973		yes
life science	1974		yes
cultural	1973		yes
recreational			yes
other			no

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

1.0 LAND TENURE

Hwy #101 intersects the park and is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Transportation Ontario by vesting order. A hydro corridor adjacent to the highway is authorized by Land Use Permit to Ontario Hydro. Park staff have negotiated with Ontario Hydro to eliminate the use of herbicides in the part of the corridor adjacent to the highway. Negotiations are underway for the remainder of the corridor.

1.1 Guidelines

- 1.1.1** Hwy #101 will be maintained by the Ministry of Transportation and all hydro lines will be maintained by Ontario Hydro.
- 1.1.2** Existing primary utility and service lines bisecting the park will be confined to the utility corridor.
- 1.1.3** Park staff will negotiate with the Ministry of Transportation Ontario by Spring 1996 to reduce or eliminate herbicide and pesticide use in the utility corridors. Mechanical treatment (i.e. brush removal) will be permitted.

2.0 LAND ACQUISITION/DISPOSAL

Currently, there are no land acquisition or disposal proposals.

3.0 EXISTING/PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Shoals has one campground (Little Wawa Lake) with 44 sites and approximately five interior campsites associated with the canoe routes (see section 4.0 for more details on the canoe routes). There is the one-kilometre Lonesome Bog self-guided interpretive trail, a trailer sanitation station, and a day-use area with a beach/picnic area, boat launch and fish cleaning table. The staff area includes a 15 person staff house and maintenance area (See maps).

Prairie Bee access point, located approximately eight kilometres west of the campground, has a parking lot and boat launch. It provides access to excellent angling opportunities on Prairie Bee, Lower Prairie Bee and Windermere Lakes. These lakes are not within the park except for parts of their shorelines which form the park boundary. This access point is also the starting point for a canoe route that lies partially within the park.

An active landfill site exists in the southern portion of the park, just north of Hwy #101, and is operated by the Ministry of Natural Resources' Chapleau District.

3.1 Guidelines

- 3.1.1** No future development will take place until an approved park management plan or Field Environmental Planning Procedure (for an approved Class EA for a specific project) is in place.
- 3.1.2** Backcountry facilities will be maintained in accordance with provincial park standards to the degree possible recognizing that funding is limited.

4.0 RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Car camping occurs on 44 sites within the Little Wawa Lake campground. Car camping offers amenities such as privies, picnic tables, drinking water, fire grates, etc.

The more adventurous person willing to forgo most of these amenities can paddle the two canoe route loops that lie partially within the park. Five campsites associated with the canoe routes lie within the park boundary. The remainder are outside the park on Crown land. Other summer recreation activities include walking, nature study, canoeing, angling, and swimming, while cross country skiing, snowshoeing, winter camping and snowmobiling occur during the winter.

The Prairie Bee access point provides access to excellent angling opportunities in several lakes bordering the park. See section 3.0 for more details.

4.1 Guidelines

- 4.1.1 A review of recreational activities and facilities in the park will be carried out as part of the management planning process to determine the needs of visitors, levels of use and the potential for the addition or reduction of activities and facilities.

5.0 COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

5.1 Trapping

There are four registered traplines located partially within park boundaries (CP-29, CP-36, CP-45, and CP-46), as well as one active trapper cabin and two abandoned cabins.

5.1.1 Guidelines

- 5.1.1.1 Licensed commercial trapping will be phased out of the park by January 1, 2010, except for trapping by Status Indians enjoying Treaty rights or when no application for renewal of the permit is received from the current permit holder. If a license is revoked, surrendered, or an application for transfer is received prior to that date, all portions of the registered trapline within the park will be rescinded from the trapline's legal description.

- 5.1.1.2 Transfer of the existing traplines will only be allowed between or to Status Indians. Only Status Indian trappers's helpers are permitted to assist Indian trappers.

- 5.1.1.3 No new traplines or trap cabins will be established in the park. No reconstruction will be permitted in the park.

- 5.1.1.4 The transfer of traplines must be approved by the Ministry.

5.2 Mining

There are two abandoned gravel pits located along the Hwy #101 corridor within park boundaries (See map). These were once held and operated by the Ministry of Transportation Ontario, but since abandonment have become the responsibility of MNR.

5.2.1 Guidelines

- 5.2.1.1** No mining activities, including prospecting, staking of mining claims, aggregate extraction, or development of mines will be permitted.
- 5.2.1.2** If mineral exploration and/or development are carried out in the vicinity of the park, MNR will discuss and negotiate appropriate prescriptions to deal with timing of operations, location of roads, and potential impacts on water quality and fishery resources of the park.
- 5.2.1.3** All gravel pits will be rehabilitated over a five year period by The Shoals Provincial Park staff, to the degree possible depending on funding levels.

5.3 Forestry

The land base surrounding The Shoals Provincial Park boundaries is described in the Chapleau District Land Use Guidelines as a General Mixed Use area to the south and the Windermere/Goldie Remote Recreation area to the north. The primary activity identified in this area is forest harvesting. Encompassing the park on all sides is the Superior Forest Management Unit. Timber here is licensed to Superior Forest Management Inc.

5.3.1 Guidelines

- 5.3.1.1** No commercial logging activities are permitted within park boundaries.
- 5.3.1.2** Prescriptions for access, harvest, renewal and maintenance activities adjacent to the park will be developed during the timber management planning process for the Superior Forest, which includes full public consultation and a multi-disciplinary planning team. In general, prescriptions will recognize parks and park-related values that may be impacted by timber management activities. Examples of values are: water quality, fish and wildlife populations and habitats, vegetation species and communities, cultural features, and aesthetic qualities.

Timber management activities can impact these values through unplanned access, erosion, siltation, noise, loss of habitat or significant features, and eliminating natural areas that provide linkages to other natural areas. Specific prescriptions to protect parks and park-related values will vary depending on terrain, tree species, timing of park use compared to timing of the timber management activity, noise, aesthetics, viewscape and access.

Areas of Concern will be designated adjacent to the park. Within these, timber management operations will be conducted using a range of treatment options (i.e. reserves, modified harvesting). Daily/seasonal timing of operations, spray buffers, road planning, requirements on work permits, and existing MNR guidelines (i.e. Fisheries and Water Quality, Moose Habitat, Stream Crossings) will also be used to protect known park values.

- 5.3.1.3** All new primary and secondary roads constructed for harvesting operations will be kept at least 180 metres from park boundaries. Exceptions will be reviewed in detail on a case by case basis.

6.0 NATIVE INTERESTS

There are no current native interests in The Shoals Provincial Park. However the park lies in the Robinson-Superior Treaty #60 area and may be used for subsistence activities by Status Indians enjoying treaty rights. (Also see Guideline 7.4.1.2 regarding areas of the park where hunting is permitted.) There is some evidence to suggest that the park was used as a trapping ground during the early 1900s by native peoples.

6.1 Guidelines

6.1.1 Management planning and development for the park will be carried out without prejudice to, and may be superseded by, any settlements of claims made between the Ontario Government and the Indian bands in Ontario.

7.0 NATURAL RESOURCES

7.1 Water Levels

A dam operated by the Ministry of Natural Resources is partially located within park boundaries at the north end of the park between Windermere and Lower Prairie Bee Lakes to control water levels for recreation and fishery purposes. The dam was originally constructed in the early 1900s by the Austin-Nicholson Lumber Co. to control water levels on the lake for the spring log drive.

7.1.1 Guidelines

7.1.1.1 There will be no motorboat size restrictions on any park lake. This may be reviewed in a Park Management Plan in the event that any new information becomes available indicating the necessity for restrictions.

7.1.1.2 The issue of upgrading, replacing or abandoning the dam will be addressed during the park management planning process.

7.2 Water Quality

Soil and groundwater contamination by diesel fuel may be the cause of an occasional visible sheen on the surface of the water near the staff house on Little Wawa Lake. This is a concern because of aesthetics, possible environmental degradation and because the lake is the water source for the campground.

A diesel generator set was located on park lands adjacent to the staff house. Hearsay information suggests that diesel fuel regularly overflowed during tank filling operations. The building, generator set and associated tankage were removed in 1988. Contaminated soil was also removed and replaced with clean soil.

In 1992, a visible sheen was noticed on the water in the vicinity of the generator set. It seemed to reappear after periods of high soil moisture contents (i.e. in spring, after heavy rainfalls). Remedial action included further soil excavation, test pits to determine location of contaminated soil, and installation of straw bales at the shoreline (later replaced by geotextile filter cloth).

The contaminant leaching is not causing a water quality problem. The plume in the lake can be controlled by remedial measures.

7.2.1 Guidelines

- 7.2.1.1** Further soil and groundwater investigation will be undertaken by MNR. Components of the investigation are detailed in a report titled "Work Plan Soil and Groundwater Contamination Investigation The Shoals Provincial Park".

7.3 Vegetation

Two factors have influenced the flora of the park: glacial deposits and logging. Changing water levels due to the construction of logging dams have influenced shoreline communities. Balsam Fir and Black Spruce are the dominant tree species. On shorelines and eskers, Red and White Pine are occasionally found but only scattered individuals are present, possibly due to the widespread removal of these species by logging in the 1920s and 1930s and because they are near the edge of their northern limit (Hosie, 1973). Approximately 28 vegetation communities occur in the park ranging from conifer forest to herbaceous wetlands. Marshes are considered the most significant vegetation community because of their diversity and importance as waterfowl habitat. Wild rice was planted in a 1.5 kilometre stretch in the Grazing River, north of Hwy #101 in 1978.

7.3.1 Guidelines

- 7.3.1.1** Dead, diseased, or wind damaged trees will be removed from developed areas only where there is a threat to human safety and/or property; and/or where it is necessary to meet the park's protection and recreation objectives.
- 7.3.1.2** Non-native species will not be introduced.
- 7.3.1.3** Limited personal consumption of berries and edible wild plants will be permitted in all but the nature reserve zones.
- 7.3.1.4** The occurrence of vegetative insects and diseases, native to the forest region in which the park is situated, is recognized as an integral component of the park's ecology. Insect infestations and diseases will normally be allowed to progress naturally. If such outbreaks threaten values which the park was defined to protect, they will be controlled where feasible, using biological controls wherever possible.
- 7.3.1.5** Insects and diseases not native to the park's forest region will be controlled where feasible. When control is undertaken, it will be directed as narrowly as possible to the specific insect or disease, so as to have minimal effects on the balance of the park environment. Biological controls will be used whenever possible.
- 7.3.1.6** In accordance with PM 1.00, no commercial harvesting of wild rice will be permitted except by Status Indians enjoying treaty rights.

7.4 Wildlife

Moose, Red Fox, Lynx, Marten, Beaver, Muskrat, and Otter are among mammals living in the park. Birds spotted include Osprey, Bald Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Ruffed and Spruce Grouse, and several species of hawk and owl. A moose winter concentration area is located in Topham Township at the extreme south west corner of the park. Traditionally, hunting has taken place at The Shoals Provincial Park.

7.4.1 Guidelines

- 7.4.1.1 Any wildlife management initiatives which are proposed for the park must be consistent with provincial park policies
- 7.4.1.2 Hunting is permitted only on the north side of Hwy #101 away from development. This will be reviewed during the Park Management Planning process, to determine if hunting is still a desirable recreational activity within the park. Hunting is not permitted south of Hwy #101 within the park.
- 7.4.1.3 Animal populations may be controlled when it is essential to protect human health and safety, the health of a species outside the park, or the values for which the park was established. When control is necessary, techniques will be used that have minimal effects on the balance of the resource base. Any hunting or trapping for management purposes will be carried out under the strict supervision of, or directly by, the Ministry of Natural Resources.

7.5 Fisheries

Fish species found in the park include Northern Pike, Walleye, Whitefish, and Perch. Little Wawa Lake was stocked with Walleye in 1968 and 1976. Other lakes bordering the park have been stocked to augment the excellent angling opportunities they provide. Walleye has been stocked in Prairie Bee Lake (1966) and Windermere Lake (1963/64). Brook Trout were stocked in Oxygen Lake (1969, 1971 and 1975). Windermere Lake was also stocked with Lake Trout (1953/54) and Smallmouth Bass (1938). No current stocking measures are in place.

7.5.1 Guidelines

- 7.5.1.1 Sport fishing will be encouraged.
- 7.5.1.2 Sport ice fishing will continue to be permitted. This activity will be reviewed during the park management planning process with more detailed policies being developed.
- 7.5.1.3 Management of the sport fishery will be consistent with the provisions of the Chapleau District Fisheries Management Plan, emphasizing the maintenance of a high quality sport fishery for park visitors.
- 7.5.1.4 Commercial fishing, including commercial bait fishing will not be permitted in the park.
- 7.5.1.5 Bait fishing will be permitted in the park for personal use only. Should any concerns arise about the health of the bait fish populations, controls may be implemented through licensing.
- 7.5.1.6 The use of live bait will continue to be permitted throughout the park until reviewed during the park management planning process. A study to determine the effects of live bait use on the present fish populations will be conducted.
- 7.5.1.7 The need for a fisheries study to determine sustainable harvest levels will be examined.

7.6 Fire Management

A large mature Jack Pine blowdown has been identified in the southwest corner of Little Wawa Lake area as a high risk fire hazard.

7.6.1 Guidelines

- 7.6.1.1** All wild fires will be suppressed until such time as a Park Management Plan determines zoning, and a Fire Management Plan reviews all options for addressing fires in the park.
- 7.6.1.2** The mature Jack Pine blowdown will be investigated during the Fire Management Planning process for options to stabilize it from fire hazard.

7.7 Landforms

At the southern portion of Little Wawa Lake, a regionally, or perhaps nationally, significant glacial meltwater delta is located. This is a major point where meltwater from an ice mass entered glacial Lake Sultan. The resulting fanning out of esker ridges resembles a "bird's foot" delta. This feature deserves further investigation to determine its exact nature and significance. There are eskers and sand shoals beneath Little Wawa Lake, from which the park derives its name.

Shoreline and campsite erosion is a problem created mainly by pedestrian traffic. Foot traffic from the campsites has created gullies in the easily eroded sandy soils. Surface run-off from the adjacent campground has accentuated these gullies.

7.7.1 Guidelines

- 7.7.1.1** All eskers and deltas will be managed as nature reserves until such time as a management plan defines zoning within the park. These landforms will be identified and mapped.
- 7.7.1.2** No aggregates will be permitted to be removed from within the park.
- 7.7.1.3** A new earth sciences report will focus on investigating the meltwater delta, the various esker complexes, and any newly acquired land within park boundaries.
- 7.7.1.4** Where possible, campsites will be closed, rehabilitated, and erosion control measures implemented to slow the erosion process and return the campground to as much of a natural condition as is possible.
- 7.7.1.5** Erosion will be identified as a major problem in the Park Management Plan.

8.0 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Within the Park, cultural resources provide evidence of the logging industry which occurred in the area from the early 1900s until the 1930s. Evidence of an era gone by still remains with such remnants as old haul roads, logging camps and log flumes. The deserted mill town of Nicholson, the home of the Austin-Nicholson Lumber Company, is located adjacent to the northern park boundary. Sites relating to three different prehistoric cultures have been located adjacent to the park.

8.1 Guidelines

- 8.1.1** All historic sites will be monitored and protected against destruction and removal.
- 8.1.2** A cultural resources inventory of the park will be completed, emphasising any recent boundary acquisitions.

9.0 NATURAL HERITAGE EDUCATION

Natural Heritage Education at The Shoals is self-use. In-park information services include the park brochure, trail guide, tabloid and other brochures, and two fibrelight interpretive panels at the Lonesome Bog Trail. Therefore, virtually all contact with visitors takes place at the gatehouse and through informal meetings with park staff.

- 9.1.1 The Shoals will continue to offer a self-use level of service.
- 9.1.2 The information function will be assumed by all park staff, particularly those working at the gatehouse.
- 9.1.3 Other forms of communication media such as newsletters, exhibits and pamphlets will be provided to visitors.
- 9.1.4 Park visitors will be surveyed to determine their opinions of the Natural Heritage Education program and adjustments will be made as required.
- 9.1.5 Natural Heritage Education efforts will attempt to foster an appreciation of the park's natural and cultural resources.
- 9.1.6 Groups or individuals will be encouraged to use the park resources for outdoor education purposes which are compatible with park policy and protection guidelines. Information about park resources will be made available upon request.
- 9.1.7 A Natural Heritage Education Strategy will be written within one year of approval of this IMS. It will be reviewed and updated each time the Park Management Plan is reviewed, and revised as required.
- 9.1.8 The entrance sign to Little Wawa Lake Campground will be changed to include "The Shoals Provincial Park" name by the end of the 1995 operating season. This will avoid confusion by visitors.

10.0 RESEARCH

All existing research for The Shoals, such as Earth and Life Science Inventories, was completed during the early 1970s. Additionally, boundary changes have also occurred since that time. As a result there are information gaps which need to be addressed, particularly with respect to the inventories.

10.1 Guidelines

- 10.1.1 All research activities carried out in the park will be in accordance with existing policies governing research in provincial parks, with priority placed on recreation, fisheries, life and earth science, and cultural inventories.

11.0 MARKETING

The Shoals does not have a marketing strategy. Traditionally the campground has been under utilized. The main attractions of the park are the beach and swimming area, the quiet campground, the good angling at Prairie Bee Lake, the boating opportunities and blueberry picking in August.

11.1 Guidelines

11.1.1 A park marketing strategy will be prepared. Its primary emphasis will be the promotion of The Shoals as a stop over for Hwy #101 travellers and a destination for non-residents because of the relatively low surrounding resident population.

11.1.2 The gatehouse will be used as an information centre with displays informing visitors about things to do at The Shoals, and about nearby facilities, services and activities.

11.1.3 Advertising in local newspapers will be increased to promote the park to local residents.

11.1.4 Low visitor use will be identified in the Park Management Plan.

12.0 REFERENCES

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