

KESAGAMI PROVINCIAL PARK

INTERIM MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

APRIL 1998



Additional information about the park and copies of this publication can be obtained from:

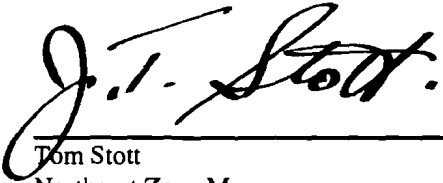
OMNR, Ontario Parks
199 Larch Street, Suite 404
Sudbury, Ontario, P3E 5P9

Cochrane District OMNR Office
c/o Kesagami Provincial Park, Park Superintendent
P.O. Box 730, 2 Third Ave.
Cochrane, Ontario, P0L 1C0

APPROVAL STATEMENT

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

This Interim Management Statement will provide direction for the management of Kesagami Provincial Park until a Management Plan can be prepared.



98-04-15

Tom Stott
Northeast Zone Manager
Ontario Parks

Date

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name	Kesagami Provincial Park
Classification	Wilderness
Site Region/Site District	2E-2 & 2E-3
OMNR Administrative Region/District	Northeast/Cochrane & Moosonee
Total Area (ha)	55,977
Regulation Date	June 7, 1983 [O. Reg. 343/83, Sched. 128 & Boundary change December 1984 (O. Reg. 187/84)]

TARGETS

Earth Science Representation:

Opatica Subprovince -

- Extensive, thick peat deposits.
- Peat shoreline deposits and features (caves & pillars).
- Beaches (sand, cobble, boulder) over peat.
- String bogs (patterned bogs).

Life Science Representation:

Abitibi Uplands-

Black spruce (*Picea mariana*)-tamarack (*Larix laricina*) bog forests, patterned bogs and fen meadows.

James Bay Lowlands-

Depauperate marshes, scattered hardwood such as trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and white birch (*Betula papyrifera*) stands.

Cultural Resources Representation:

Fur trade history (northern hunters/anglers & fur trade/trading communities) and Cree occupations.

Recreation Opportunities:

Angling, canoeing, motor boating (commercial tourism), kayaking, backcountry camping, wildlife viewing & nature appreciation, restricted fly-in access, hunting (Status Indians only), and swimming.

INVENTORIES

Survey Level	Earth Science	Life Science	Cultural	Recreational	Other
Reconnaissance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1983 Earth Science Processes and Features for Land Use Planning (McKenzie, McKenzie, & McCulloch) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1984 Life Science Inventory (Brunton) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1988 Preliminary Archaeological Survey of Kesagami Lake (Pollock) • 1993 Fossil Island Burial Site (Pollock) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1983 Kesagami Lake & River Canoe Route 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1984 Background Report (Brunton) • 1994-95 Use & Population Assessment of the Kesagami Lake Walleye and Northern Pike Fishery (Scholten, Thompson & Puddister)
Requirement			X	X	

INTRODUCTION

Kesagami Provincial Park is a *wilderness* class park located 130 kilometres northeast of Cochrane and 90 kilometres southeast of Moosonee (Figure 1). Established on June 7, 1983 and enlarged in 1984, the 55,977 hectare park includes the 20,780 hectare Kesagami Lake anchored at its southern extremity.

The terrain of the Kesagami Lake area is flat, poorly drained and dominated by peat bogs, muskegs and expansive fen meadows. Boreal forest tree species including black spruce (*Picea mariana*) and tamarack (*Larix laricina*) grow in the wetlands with trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and white birch (*Betula papyrifera*) thriving on the few elevated sandy ridges.

Kesagami Lake covers approximately 200 square kilometres and is unique in size for the James Bay Region. It is shallow, with an average depth of two metres and a maximum depth of six metres. Postulated to have been formed by glacial erosion or the grounding of a large ice block, Kesagami Lake is renowned for its trophy pike and excellent walleye fisheries. It also supports healthy populations of Whitefish, Herring, Burbot, Common White and Longnose Sucker and Perch. The Kesagami River drops 250 metres over its 112 kilometre journey to James Bay and during spring conditions is an extremely challenging whitewater canoe route.

PARK AREA

The total area of the park is 55,977 hectares, encompassing all of Kesagami Lake and a 200 metre strip of land on either side of the Kesagami River, which flows north from its outlet for 112 kilometres down to the confluence of the Haarricanaw River, just south of Hannah Bay on James Bay. In 1984, an additional 1,777 hectares were added to the park to include the entire eastern shoreline of Kesagami Lake (Figure 2). Consequently, a portion of three distinct string bogs were arbitrarily segmented by the park boundary. In accordance with a recommendation in the life science inventory (Brunton, Daniel, 1984) the boundary will be extended to incorporate string bogs in Newham Bay that are partly within the park. These wetlands are hydrologically connected to the wetland complex that is identified as a proposed reserve zone.

PARK VALUES

Kesagami Provincial Park has a variety of features and values requiring protection and/or management.

These include:

- Significant historical and archaeological sites: Mesackamee House established in 1777, by the Hudson Bay Company.
- Fossil Island burial site (field investigation Pollock/Larose, 1993).
- Significant Walleye/Northern Pike habitat (Thompson/Scholtan/Puddister, 1994).
- Woodland Caribou habitat present within and adjacent to the park (aerial survey of Big Island, 1992).
- A large lake with good recreation potential to meet recreation objectives for a wilderness class park.
- The 112 kilometre Kesagami River canoe route from Kesagami Lake to Hannah Bay.
- Significant earth science features include a till plain, lacustrine clay and peat deposits (McKenzie, I. D., McKenzie, G. D. & McCulloch, 1983).
- Life science features are characterized by flora and fauna of the boreal forest (Brunton, D. F., 1984).

ISSUES

A number of issues have been identified. These are addressed in this *Interim Management Statement*. These will be revisited in the future through park management planning.

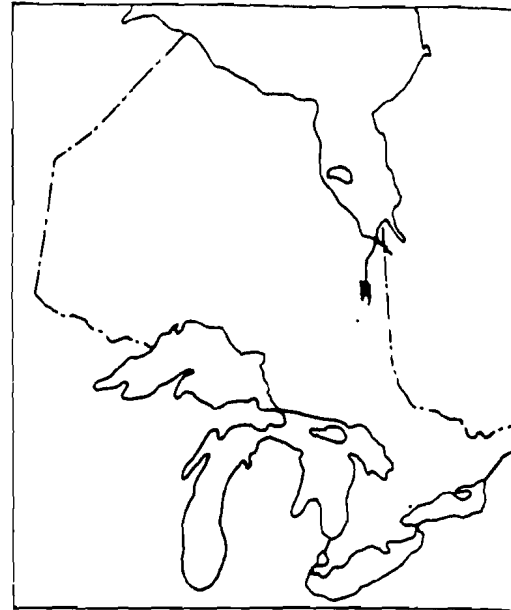
The issues include:

- the accommodation of traditional activities of Aboriginal people;
- unplanned mechanized access to the park;
- protection of the fisheries resources;

Figure 1 Regional Setting

Kesagami Provincial Park
Parc provincial Kesagami

- Major Highways
- Secondary Road
- +— Railway



Scale / Echelle 1:1,600,000

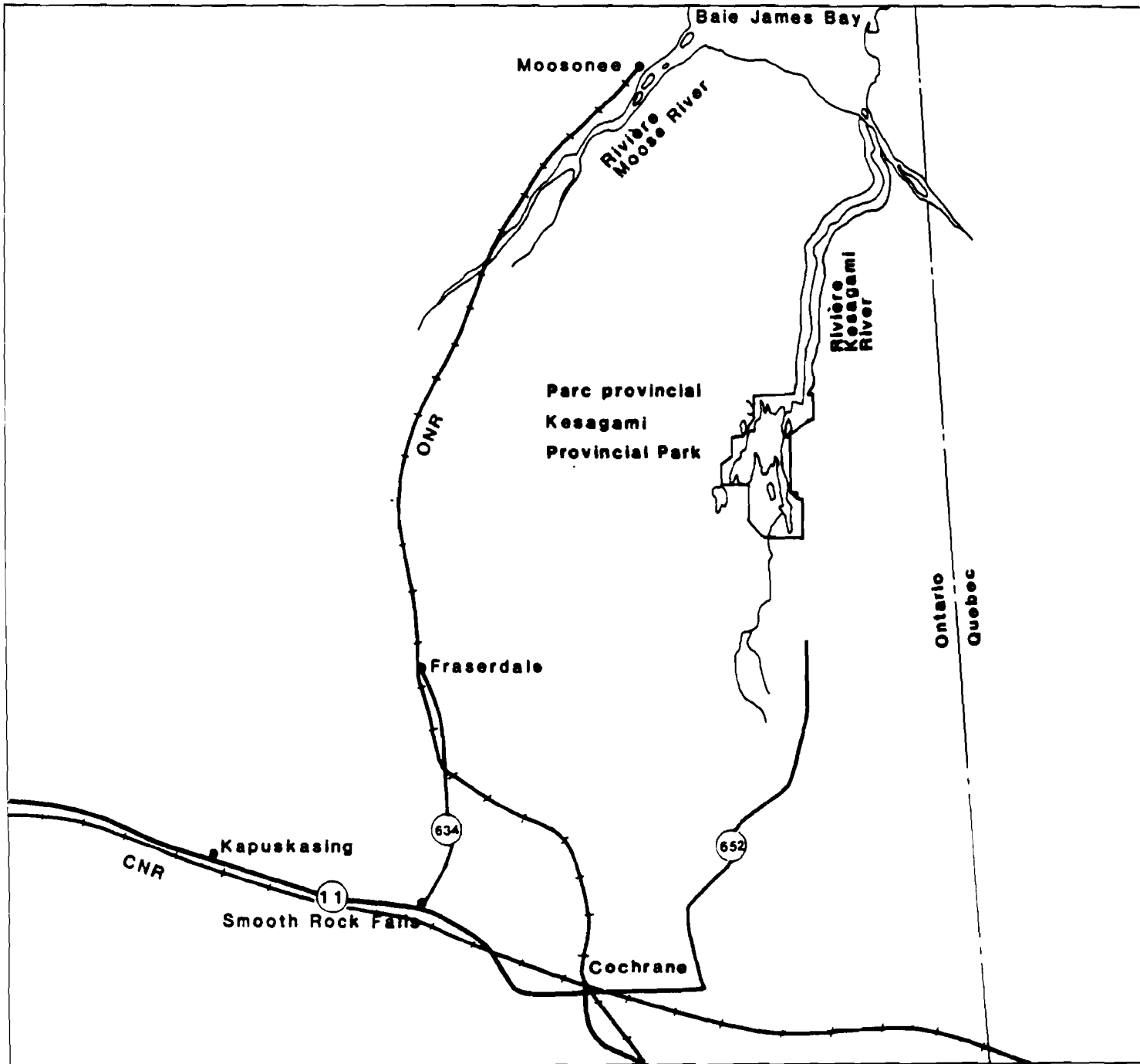
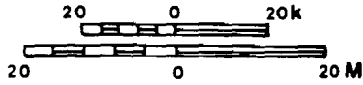


Figure 2 Park Area

Kesagami Provincial Park
Parc provincial Kesagami

- Lodge
- ▲ Campsites (MNR Constructed)

Scale/ Echelle 1:250,000

Baie James Bay

Kesagami River
Rivière

200m boundary/limite

le Manidoah Island

Lac Kesagami Lake

le Big Island

Baie Opimiskau Bay

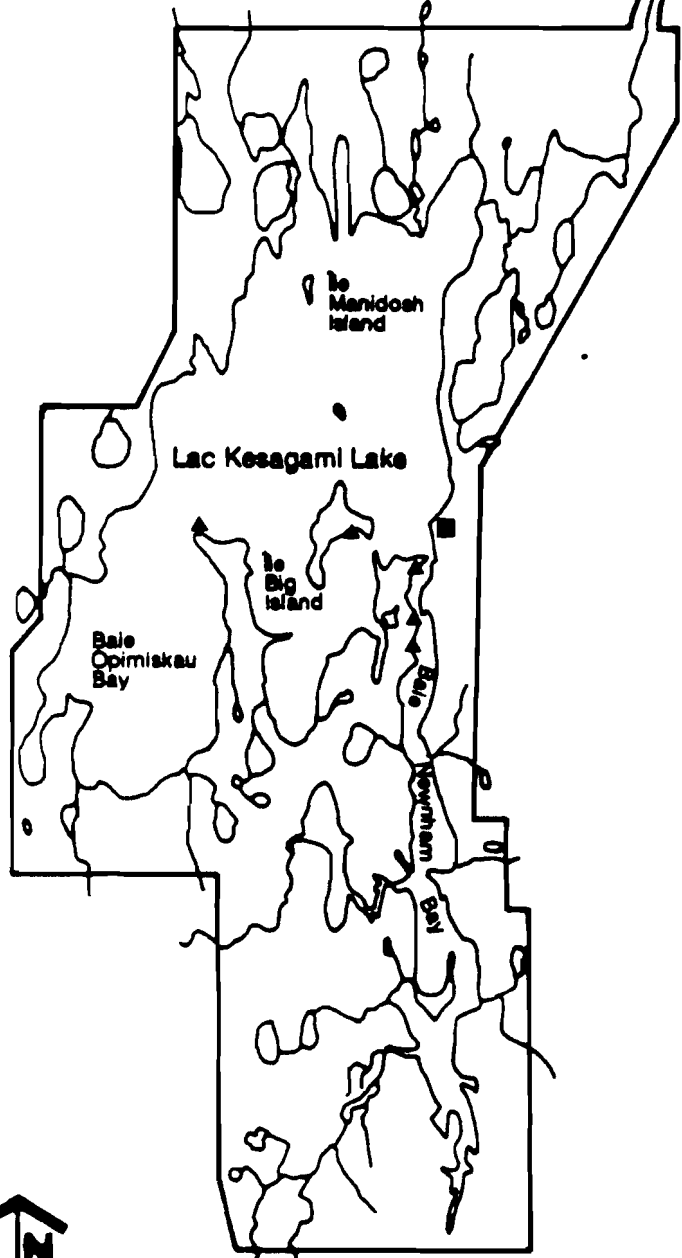
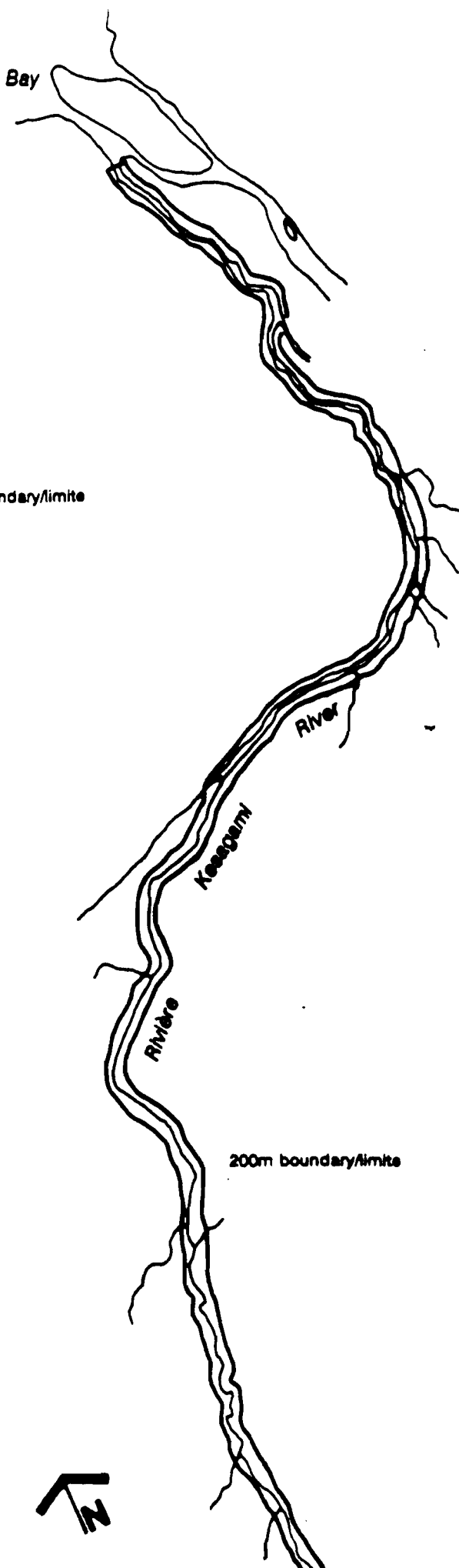
Baie
Northern Bay

Kesagami
Rivière

River

200m boundary/limite

Rivière Kesagami River



ISSUES CONTINUED...

- use of motorboats and entry into the park by commercial tourism operations;
- use of boat caches by commercial tourist operators in the park;
- capability for expansion of the existing tourism operations and new commercial tourism services;
- the need to develop a more complete data base with respect to the park resources (e.g. existing use, cultural resources, development potentials;
- the need for park user permits and fee structure;
- the need to develop resource management policies that will ensure the continued protection of the parks natural, cultural and recreational resources; and,
- the requirements to integrate the present and future planning and management concerns for Kesagami Lake fishery with those of the park.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Resource management for Kesagami Provincial Park will be guided by the *Ontario Parks Planning and Management Policies, 1992* (see Appendices).

Land Tenure

There are no privately owned lands in the park. There is one commercial tourism operation within the park, under a 20 year lease agreement, including two 10 year renewal options. The operation was established in the 1960s and in 1983 was upgraded to include a European style lodge and seven cabins. The property remains subject to regulations set out in the *Provincial Parks Act*.

This commercial tourism operation would be permitted to remain in its present location in accordance with conditions of the lease agreement and policies outlined in this *Interim Management Statement*.

There is moderate seasonal use of Kesagami Lake by lodge patrons, clientele from outpost camps and adjacent lakes, and by other commercial and private fly-in-users.

There is also a history of minor resource harvest activities. A small commercial fishery was operated by Aboriginal people in the 1960s. Aboriginal people account for virtually all trapping and hunting that has occurred or is occurring in the park.

Proposed Development

The *Ontario Provincial Park Planning and Management Policies (1992)* allow for existing commercial tourism operations to remain in a *wilderness class park*. The existence, role and future development of commercial tourism facilities in Kesagami Lake will be identified in the future Park Management Plan.

Other areas for discussion:

- The role commercial tourism facilities play in park operations and management.
- The marketing and promotion of the park.
- Accessibility for fly-in tourist operators who benefit from using the park resource.
- Proposals for expansion of the existing tourism operation and potential impacts on the park's natural, cultural, social and economic environments.
- Minor renovations or improvements that may be considered and their consistency with all codes and regulations.

Recreation Management

In managing the park, Ontario Parks intends to provide a high quality wilderness experience by offering outdoor recreation opportunities for extended, non-mechanized travel through the park's interior along the Kesagami River.

The Kesagami River offers canoeists a challenging wilderness whitewater canoe route. The management direction is *to preserve the remote wilderness integrity of the river for back-country whitewater canoeing and camping opportunities*. To date, only a limited amount is known regarding the recreational

Recreation Management Continued...

use of the Kesagami River. In order to ensure that the policies presented in the future Park Management Plan accommodate the needs of both resident and non-resident recreationists, more information and research are required.

The maintenance of environmental quality and the protection of park values are fundamental to resource management in Kesagami. The park's resource management programs will ensure that natural processes are allowed to function freely, within the constraints of public safety and the need to protect values within and adjacent to the park.

1. In support of the preparation of the management plan, the Ministry of Natural Resources will undertake geological and biological inventories for the Kesagami River area.
2. Commercial hydro electric development is not permitted in the park.

In keeping with the park's emphasis on air and water travel, and in order to protect the sensitive natural and historical features, there is no provision for road access. Aircraft provide the primary means of access. Landings are permitted by regulation, with both private and commercial aircraft being encouraged to obtain landing authority from MNR. Access to Kesagami Lake also exists from three lakes adjacent to the park (23H-17, Partridge and Edgar) via portages or small creeks.

Commercial Tourism

Currently there is one commercial lodge within Kesagami Provincial Park, Kesagami Wilderness Lodge. There are three outpost camps directly adjacent to the park.

Kesagami Wilderness Lodge will be permitted to continue to operate at a maximum capacity of 70 guests. Adjacent outpost camps will continue to operate, at their current capacity pending the preparation of the Park Management Plan.

Existing unauthorized boat caches, associated with the above outpost camp operations, within the park will be formalized through the issuance of commercial tourism land use permits subject to annual fees. The number of boats and a requirement for boat registration will be identified in the land use permits.

The potential for expansion of existing and/or development of new resource-based tourism operations will be assessed in the Park Management Plan, within the context of the sustainability of the sport fishery and the need to protect significant natural values. In the interim no expansion of existing or development of new facilities/services will be permitted.

Wildlife Management

Status Indians with Treaty Rights will carry on traditional natural resource harvesting activities in Kesagami Provincial Park for subsistence and ceremonial purposes. Such activities will conform to objectives of other conservation and public safety legislation.

Wildlife populations will not be actively managed in the park. Woodland Caribou are present within and adjacent to the park. However, no accurate population estimates have been made. Big Island and area between Opimiskau Bay and the south shore of Edgar Lake are suspected calving sites. Caribou were seen on Big Island during an aerial survey of 1992. Woodland Caribou management needs will be a component of the Park Management Plan. Comprehensive fauna investigations will be undertaken in the park to determine the status of the Bog Lemming population in Newham Bay.

Mineral Resource Management

New mining activity, including prospecting, staking of mining claims, development of mines or the extraction of aggregates will not be permitted in Kesagami Provincial Park.

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Fisheries Management

Kesagami Provincial Park will be managed to protect a healthy sustainable population of Northern Pike and Walleye fisheries. A size and quota limit was implemented for Kesagami Lake in 1987 to protect the brood stock and trophy portion of the pike population. This regulation will continue to be applied to Kesagami Lake to protect the trophy pike population.

Fisheries Management Continued...

A Fisheries Management Strategy was completed in 1994-95, outlining recommendations for Kesagami Lake. The Kesagami Lake fishery was found to have an estimated fishing pressure of between 27,308 and 30,500 angling hours or approximately 1.5 angler hours/hectare. This angling pressure can be sustained given the productivity of the fishery. Walleye and northern pike harvests are well within the total potential yield for Kesagami Lake. An estimated 6,000 to 7,500 northern pike are caught and released each year. If hooking mortalities reach 10% or greater, especially for small and large fish, then the trophy northern pike fishery may be in jeopardy. Presently, walleye and northern pike populations remain healthy with high quality angling for both species (Thompson/Scholtan/Puddister, 1994-95).

Management measures will include the following:

- the development of a pamphlet will encourage anglers to adopt conservation measures such as barbless hooks and proper handling and release of fish;
- continued monitoring of the fishery on a 5 to 10 year interval; and,
- evaluation of the need for regulations (e.g. sanctuaries, and other conservation measures) during future management planning.

Commercial fishing and commercial bait fishing will not be permitted in the park.

Vegetation Management

Commercial timber harvesting will not be permitted in the park.

The area south of the park is located in the Moose River Crown Management Unit and is eligible for harvesting. During timber management planning for the Moose River, management unit areas allocated for harvesting around the Lower and Upper Serpent Lakes were deferred until the completion of a remote tourism strategy (completed in 1997).

Fire is recognized as a process integral to an evolving natural succession of the boreal forest and will be permitted to burn in the park, unless it threatens human life, lands of value outside the park or the commercial operations in the park. A Fire

Management Plan will be developed and tailored to meet the goals and objectives of the park.

Natural Resources Management

The natural resources inventories done on the park are highlighted in the reference section of this report. Based on this inventory work done to date, a variety of regionally significant earth and life science features have been identified:

- **earth science:** fossil deposits, till plain, lacustrine clay, peat deposits and features (caves & pillars), beaches (sand, cobble, boulder) over peat, and string bogs (patterned bogs).
- **life science:** the area is situated within the Hudson Bay Lowlands section of the Boreal Forest, it is characterized by immense swamp, bog and muskeg. Several types of vegetation have been identified.

All sensitive earth and life science features within the park's boundaries should be protected by appropriate zoning and resource management policies, and promoted for outdoor education and scientific research. All known significant natural features will be identified, and measures to ensure their protection will be outlined in the future Park Management Plan.

Cultural Resources Protection

The management of cultural resources will be directed toward protection and heritage appreciation. The Ministry of Natural Resources has been working with the Moose Factory First Nation people to identify culturally significant sites, which include historic burial sites (*Field Investigation of Fossil Island Burial Sites Settlement Surveys Ltd., 1993*) traditional campsites and ice houses. Traditional campsite use continues by the Moose Factory First Nations people who traditionally hunt and trap in the park.

A cultural resources inventory will be developed to **determine specific protection measures for existing known Aboriginal cultural, historical and archaeological sites.**

The cultural resources of the park represent two cultural themes as defined in a *Topical Organization of Ontario History*.

Cultural Resources Protection Continued...

These include:

- the occupation of Algonquin hunters and gatherers through much of the region after the last ice-sheet retreated; and,
- the fur trade.

CLIENT SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Information

A standard park leaflet/brochure will be developed to describe the classification of the park, significant natural and cultural features, the aircraft landing permit system, access, safety and general information on resource management policies. It will compliment the existing Kesagami Provincial Park Canoe Route description flyer. A detailed map will be produced that highlights rapids, natural portages, designated campsites, points of entry into the park, and general information about the park; should the demand for wilderness canoeing increase.

Education

Prospective visitors to the park, should be informed about:

- the sensitivity of the park's resources;
- the high prevailing winds on Kesagami Lake that can make navigation hazardous;
- the turbulent waters of the Kesagami River, as hazardous rapids and fast flowing water exist; and,
- Angling conservation methods such as catch & release, barbless hook, etc...methods.

Interpretation

An existing walking trail may be used as an interpretive tool to inform visitors about the history of the park. Interpretive panels may be erected on the trail should funding become available.

REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

From: Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies,
Ministry of Natural Resources, 1992.

RECREATION ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES-WILDERNESS PARKS

ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES WILDERNESS PARKS	PARK ZONES			
	WI	NR	HI	A
All Terrain Vehicle (A.T.V.) Travel				M
Aircraft Landing (water) - commercial tourism - private	M			M M
Boating (powered) - commercial - private	M			M
Campgrounds - car - boat-in/walk-in - group - back-country	Y			Y M M
Canoeing/Kayaking	Y	M	M	Y
Demonstration Areas (e.g. Logging exhibits...)				
Hiking	Y	M	M	Y
Historical Appreciation- self-guided	M	M	M	M
Horseback Riding--trail				
Mountain Biking- designated trails	M			M
Nature Appreciation- self-guided	M	M	M	M
Orienteering	M			M
Outfitting Service				M
Outpost Camp (commercial)	M			M
Painting/Photography	Y	M	M	Y
Picnic Grounds				M
Resorts/Lodges				M
Restaurants- food & beverage				M
Rock Climbing	M			M
Sailing and Sailboarding	M	M	M	M
Scuba and Skin Diving	M	M	M	M
Skiing (cross-country)/Snowshoeing	Y	M	M	Y
Snowmobiling				M
Spelunking (cave exploration)	M			
Sport Hunting				
Sport Fishing	Y	Y	Y	Y
Swimming- facility based				

LEGEND

Y Normally encouraged in this zone

M May be encouraged in this zone in certain parks where deemed appropriate

Blank Not compatible with this zone; if now existing, a non-conforming use to be phased out