



Six Mile Lake

Park Management Plan

MNR 51982

ISBN 0-7794-9006-1 (Print)

ISBN 0-7794-9007-X (PDF)

© 2005 Queen's Printer of Ontario

Printed in Ontario, Canada

Cover photo: Doug Hamilton

Additional copies of this publication can be obtained from:

**Park Superintendent
Six Mile Lake Provincial Park
Box 340
2024 Joe King Road
Coldwater, ON
L0K 1E0**

I am pleased to approve the *Six Mile Lake Park Management Plan* as the official policy for the protection and management of Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. The plan reflects the Ministry of Natural Resources' and Ontario Parks' intent to protect the natural and cultural features of Six Mile Lake Provincial Park and maintain and develop high quality opportunities for outdoor recreation and heritage appreciation for the residents of Ontario and visitors to the province.

The plan includes an implementation strategy and a summary of the public consultation that occurred as part of the planning process.

The plan for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park will be used to guide the management of the park. It may be reviewed to address changing issues or conditions.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to all those who participated in this important process.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adair Ireland-Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Adair Ireland-Smith
Managing Director
Ontario Parks

TABLE OF CONTENTS

STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES.....	IV
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.0 CLASSIFICATION.....	1
3.0 GOAL	1
4.0 OBJECTIVES.....	1
4.1 Protection	1
4.2 Recreation	4
4.3 Heritage Appreciation	4
4.4 Tourism	4
5.0 BOUNDARY	5
6.0 ZONING.....	5
6.1 Development Zone	5
6.2 Natural Environment Zones.....	5
7.0 RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP POLICIES	7
7.1 Land Management	7
7.2 Water Management.....	7
7.3 Fisheries Management	7
7.4 Wildlife Management	8
7.5 Vegetation Management	8
7.6 Fire Management	8
7.7 Cultural Resources	9
8.0 OPERATIONS POLICIES.....	9
8.1 Natural Heritage Education.....	9
8.1.1 Information	9
8.1.2 Interpretation.....	9
8.1.3 Recreation.....	9
8.2 Recreation Management	9
8.3 Tourism Services	10
8.4 Research.....	10
8.5 Marketing.....	10
9.0 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES.....	10
9.1 Internal Roads	11
9.2 Visitor Facilities.....	11
9.3 Trails	11
10.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	12
11.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION	12
12.0 REFERENCES.....	13

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Regional Context 2
Figure 2: Park Boundary & Facilities 3
Figure 3: Park Zoning..... 6

STATEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

The Ministry of Natural Resources' Statement of Environmental Values (SEV) was prepared in accordance with the *Environmental Bill of Rights* (EBR). It describes how the purposes of the EBR are to be considered whenever decisions are made which might significantly affect the environment.

The primary purpose of the EBR is *to protect, conserve and, where reasonable, restore the integrity of the environment*. From the Ministry's perspective, that broad statement of purpose translates into four objectives in its SEV:

- To ensure the long-term health of ecosystems by protecting and conserving our valuable soil, aquatic resources, forest and wildlife resources as well as their biological foundations;
- To ensure the continuing availability of natural resources for the long-term benefit of the people of Ontario;
- To protect natural heritage and biological features of provincial significance; and
- To protect human life, the resource base and physical property from the threats of forest fires, floods and erosion.

The Ministry's SEV has been considered during the preparation of this management plan. The *Six Mile Lake Provincial Park Management Plan* is intended to reflect the direction set in the SEV and to further the objectives of managing Ontario's resources on an ecologically sustainable basis.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is located immediately east of Highway 400 on the north-west shore of Six Mile Lake in the Township of Georgian Bay, District of Muskoka. The park is approximately 150 km north of Toronto (Figures 1 and 2). This recreation class park was regulated under the *Provincial Parks Act* in 1958 and was expanded in 2004 to its present size of 212 ha. Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is a popular destination, receiving on average over 61,300 visitors between 2000 and 2004. The park offers opportunities for camping, boating, fishing, swimming and hiking. It also provides boat access to Six Mile Lake and is a starting point for the Gibson-MacDonald canoe route.

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park also protects important earth and life science features. The park is in Ecodistrict 5E-7 and the area of the Great Lakes Heritage Coast. Sitting on the southern edge of the Precambrian Shield within the Central Gneiss Belt of the Grenville Province, the park was once beneath the Wisconsin ice sheet. The varied topography that has resulted from glaciation has produced a diversity of communities that are representative of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest Region, including rock barrens, mature mesic hardwood forests and wetlands. Five provincially and 21 regionally rare plant species are found within these communities. Five rare reptile species have also been documented in the park.

2.0 CLASSIFICATION

Ontario's provincial parks are classified into six broad classes which define an individual park's contributions to the park system. Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is a recreation class park. Recreation parks support a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities for large numbers of people in attractive surroundings.

This classification has been assigned to the park in recognition of the variety and quality of recreation opportunities it provides, and its

location in close proximity to population centres in central and southern Ontario.

3.0 GOAL

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park will:

Provide a variety of recreational and educational opportunities in attractive surroundings, while protecting the park's important earth and life science features.

In fulfilling this goal, the park contributes to the achievement of recreation and protection targets for the provincial park system.

4.0 OBJECTIVES

Management of individual parks is guided by the four objectives of the provincial park system – *protection, recreation, heritage appreciation and tourism*. Six Mile Lake Provincial Park contributes to the achievement of each of these objectives.

4.1 Protection

To protect the significant elements of the natural and cultural landscape of Six Mile Lake Provincial Park.

The park sits within the Central Gneiss Belt of the Grenville Province. The exposed Precambrian bedrock outcrops which characterize the park's gently rolling landscape were glacially smoothed and scoured during the late Wisconsin period. Depressions in the bedrock surface are filled with shallow layers of till and glaciolacustrine sediments derived from the period when the area was submerged below glacial Lake Algonquin some 12,000 years before present (B.P.). Glaciation also created a number of basins, where deeper organic soil deposits and wetland areas have formed. The park's earth science features are locally significant.

FIGURE 1

REGIONAL CONTEXT



Six Mile Lake

Legend

- City
- Major Highway
- Highway
- ◻ Lake
- ◼ Provincial Park
- ◼ National Park



Published October 2005
© 2005, Queen's Printer for Ontario

This map is illustrative only.
Do not rely on it as being a precise indicator of routes,
locations of features, nor as a guide to navigation.

Projection: UTM Grid Zone 17
Datum: North American Datum 1983
Base Derived From: NRVIS
Scale: 1:850,000
Produced by: Ontario Parks Central Zone

0 5 10 20
km

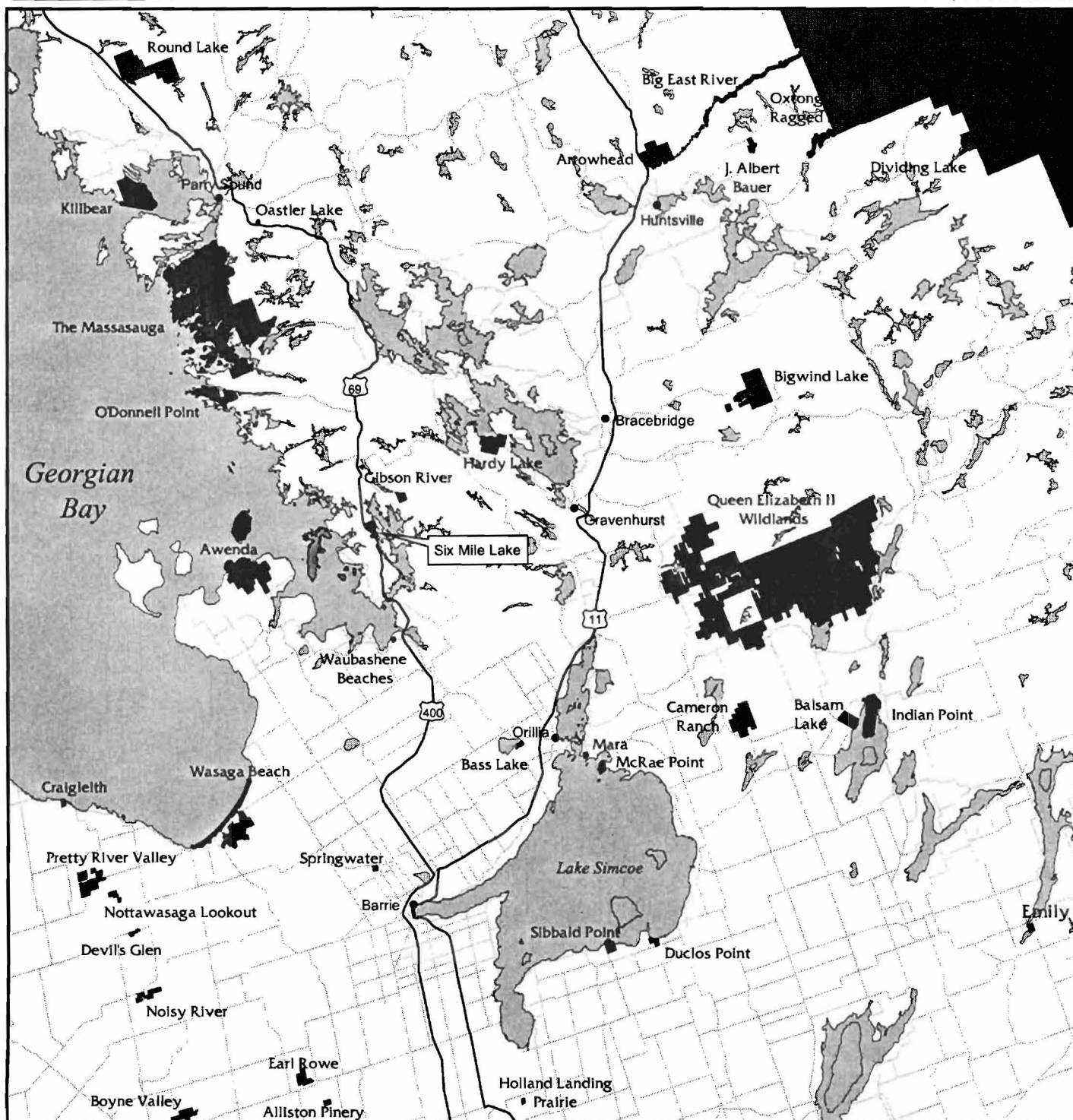


FIGURE 2

PARK BOUNDARY & FACILITIES



Six Mile Lake

Legend

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| [P] Parking | — Primary Road |
| PG Playground | — Secondary Road |
| ▲ Trailer Sanitation Site | ☁ Lake |
| ■ Building | ☼ Wetland |
| - - - Hiking Trail | ▬ Park Boundary |
| - · - · - Future Snowmobile / Hiking Trail | |

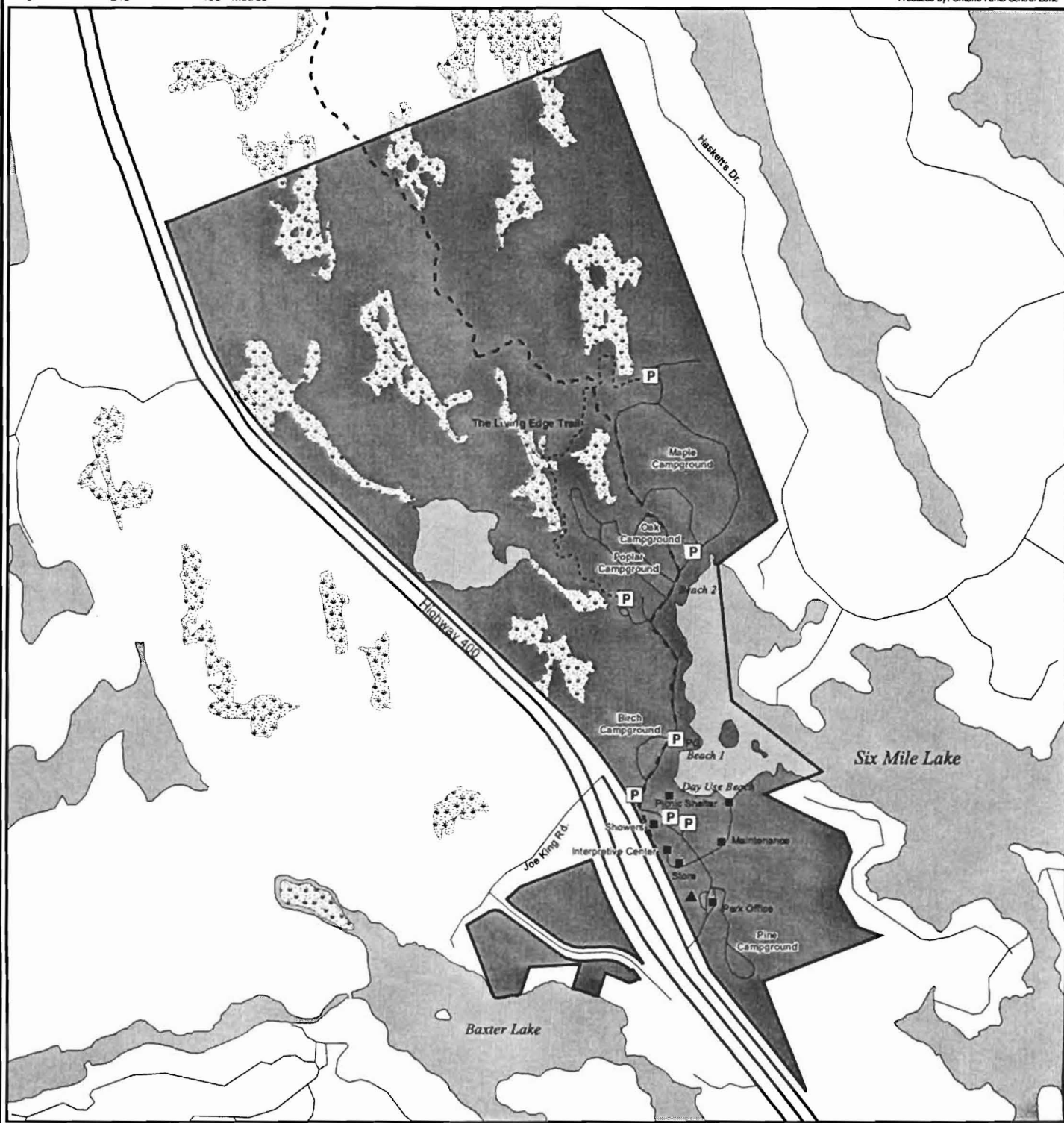
0 245 490 Metres



Published October 2005
© 2005, Queen's Printer for Ontario

This map is illustrative only.
Do not rely on it as being a precise indicator of routes,
locations of features, nor as a guide to navigation.

Projection: UTM Grid Zone 17
Datum: North American Datum 1983
Base Derived From: NRVIS
Scale: 1:15,000
Produced by: Ontario Parks Central Zone



The geology of the region has given rise to a variety of community types and species within the park that are representative of the weakly broken bedrock uplands, transition forests and wetlands found throughout Ecodistrict 5E-7. Open rock barrens support communities of lichens and mosses, grasses, thickets of Dwarf Juniper (*Juniperus communis*), Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*) and Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*), along with young hardwood forest species such as White Oak (*Quercus alba*), Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) and Trembling Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*). Areas with deeper soils are covered with Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) and Red Maple hardwood forest. Mixedwood forest communities occur on shallow to deeper soils and are comprised of Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*), White Birch (*Betula papyrifera*), Red Oak and Largetooth Aspen (*Populus grandidentata*).

Wetland areas include marsh, open water, and peatland complexes. These support a wide variety of shrubs, grasses, sedges, *Sphagnum* spp., and herbaceous aquatic vegetation. Twenty-six species identified in the park are significant at the regional or provincial level. Provincially significant species such as Carolina yellow-eyed-grass (*Xyris difformis*) and Carey's smartweed (*Polygonum careyi*) have Atlantic coastal plain affinities.

These communities provide important habitat for a variety of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians. Five reptile species at risk (i.e. special concern, threatened and endangered) have been documented in the park. The park's significant species, shallow soils, and wetlands, are sensitive to disturbance and will be protected through appropriate zoning.

4.2 Recreation

To provide visitors with opportunities for camping and land and water based recreation.

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is primarily a vacation destination for family camping. The park provides campers and day-visitors with opportunities for hiking, swimming, picnicking, fishing and boating. It also serves as an access

point for the 56 km Gibson-MacDonald canoe route and the 2,039 ha McCrae Lake Conservation Reserve.

Although closed during the winter season, the park does receive limited use for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Snowmobiling along a designated trail is also permitted (Section 8.2).

Facilities supporting these recreational uses include three beaches, boat launch and docking areas, canoe rentals, picnic shelter and hiking trail (Figure 2). The park has 217 campsites, including 53 with electricity and nine walk-in sites.

During the last 5 seasons (2000 -2004), Six Mile Lake Provincial Park received on average over 61,300 visitors, comprised of approximately 6,000 day visitors and 55,300 camper nights. The average length of stay for campers during that same period was consistently 3.0 nights, but has averaged 3.8 since 2002. Over the same period, the average party size was 4 and the July/August occupancy rate averaged 70%.

4.3 Heritage Appreciation

To provide opportunities for exploration and appreciation of the park's natural and cultural heritage.

Based on the region's natural features and history, a number of interpretive themes have been identified for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. These include the ecology of the Canadian Shield, species at risk, and settlement history of the Six Mile Lake area. Interpretive opportunities will be provided to allow park visitors to explore these themes (Section 8.1).

4.4 Tourism

To provide Ontario residents and non-resident visitors with opportunities to discover and experience the distinct natural and recreational features of the park and surrounding region.

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is primarily a vacation destination for campers from southern and central Ontario. However, the park is

visited by residents from other provinces, the United States and overseas. It also provides easy access to numerous other attractions in the Muskoka and Huronia regions, and serves as a stopover destination for some visitors.

In 2000, the average camping group spent close to \$260 on transportation, food, entertainment, etc. associated with their trip. Just over 40% of this amount, or approximately \$100, was spent within 40 km of the park. In total, visitors' expenditures amounted to approximately \$1.5 million. Visitor spending combined with park operating and capital expenditures have an economic impact on the provincial economy. The total spending at the park in 2000 supported a value of \$2.5 million and 48 person years of employment.

5.0 BOUNDARY

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park was originally regulated under the *Provincial Parks Act* in 1958. The park boundary was re-adjusted in July 2004 to accommodate the minor deletion of area for the Highway 400 expansion and addition of 126 ha to the northern end of the park. As described in Ontario Regulation 178/04, the current area of the park is 212 ha (Figure 2).

6.0 ZONING

Within the context of a park's classification, zoning is used to delineate areas based on their resource significance and recreation potential. Provincial park policy defines six zone types – *development, access, nature reserve, wilderness, natural environment* and *historical*. Zoning provides an important tool for identifying and distinguishing management requirements for the various features of a park. It is used to ensure that a park's stated goal and objectives are met.

With the exception of wilderness zones, recreation class parks may contain all zone types. Two zoning classifications are used at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park, development and natural environment (Figure 3).

6.1 Development Zone

Development zones typically contain the facilities and services required to support park operations and activities associated with intensive day-use and camping. These zones are intended to accommodate large numbers of people and a wide range of uses.

The approximately 50 ha development zone at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park contains the park office, park roads, maintenance and storage yards, park store, shower facilities, beaches, boat launch and docking areas, interpretive centre, parking areas, campgrounds and part of the snowmobile trail. This 50 ha zone contains approximately 10 ha of lakebed (Figure 3).

Future intensive facility development will be restricted to this zone. New facilities identified for this zone include a campground comfort station and park water treatment system.

6.2 Natural Environment Zones

Natural environment zones are used to delineate natural landscapes where important features are protected and limited development may be permitted to support low-intensity recreational use. Three distinct natural environment zones have been defined for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. Management of each zone will generally involve a 'hands-off' approach, allowing natural processes to function.

Natural environment zone 1 (NE1) is located in the north end of the park. At approximately 141 ha, it is the largest zone in the park, and will protect important wetland, rock barren and forest communities. These communities support a number of regionally and provincially significant species, and provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife.

Limited development to support recreational use will be permitted. NE1 includes an existing interpretive hiking trail. This zone will accommodate the establishment of a snowmobile trail (Section 9.3), which will also be used to provide additional hiking and interpretation opportunities.

FIGURE 3

PARK ZONING

ONTARIO



PARKS

Six Mile Lake

Legend

- ▲ Trailer Sanitation Site
- Building
- Hiking Trail
- Primary Road
- Secondary Road
- NE Natural Environment Zone
- D Development Zone
- Lake
- Wetland
- Park Boundary

Ontario



Published October 2005
© 2005, Queen's Printer for Ontario

This map is illustrative only.
Do not rely on it as being a precise indicator of routes,
locations of features, nor as a guide to navigation.

Projection: UTM Grid Zone 17
Datum: North American Datum 1983
Base Derived From: NRVIS
Scale: 1:15,000
Produced by: Ontario Parks Central Zone

0 240 480 Metres



Natural environment zone 2 (NE2) is located in the southeast corner of the park. This approximately 13 ha area protects a large, relatively undisturbed shrub wetland, representing one of the most significant natural areas in the park. No development for this zone is proposed at this time.

Natural environment zone 3 (NE3) is an approximately 8 ha parcel of land that sits west of Highway 400 on Baxter Lake. This zone protects open rock barrens and hardwood forest, and is considered locally significant in Ecodistrict 5E-7. No development is proposed for this zone at this time.

7.0 RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP POLICIES

The natural features of Six Mile Lake Provincial Park are generally considered to be of regional or local significance. However, the park does contain 10 provincially significant plant and reptile species, of which five are designated as species at risk (i.e. special concern, threatened and endangered). The park's resources will be managed according to the general policies defined for recreation class parks in the *Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies (1992)*, specific resources stewardship policies (PM 11.XX series) and the direction contained in the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy (1999)*. Supplementary policy direction is provided in the following sections.

Species at risk recovery strategies are currently being prepared for two species that have been documented in the park. Resource stewardship, operations and development activities will be consistent with the goals and objectives of the approved recovery strategies and /or action plans.

7.1 Land Management

The rock barrens found throughout the park support shallow soils and communities of lichens and mosses, both of which are very sensitive to disturbance. Exposed rock ridges also present a constraint to some forms of

development. These features will be avoided to the extent possible in any future facility development projects.

The park also contains a variety of wetland communities which are highly sensitive to development and pedestrian traffic. Disturbance of these areas by facility development will not be permitted. Wetland areas may, however, be featured as part of the proposed trail (Section 9.3). Environmentally sensitive design features and construction, such as boardwalks, will be used as appropriate.

Aquatic growth in the beach areas may be controlled according to applicable provincial policies and regulations.

7.2 Water Management

The water quality of Six Mile Lake in the beach areas will continue to be monitored on a regular basis to ensure human health and safety. Where required by provincial guidelines, beaches will be closed until quality measures return to acceptable standards for recreational use. Should water quality become a persistent problem, appropriate actions may be taken to identify and correct the contributing factor(s).

7.3 Fisheries Management

Fishing in Ontario is regulated by the federal *Fisheries Act* and provincial *Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act*. These regulations apply to Six Mile Lake, including the portion that falls within park boundaries. Boat launch and docking facilities are provided at the park to support sport fishing on Six Mile Lake. The park will also provide anglers with information on regulations, conservation, exotic species, and safe fishing and boating practices, when available. Regulations will be enforced by Ministry of Natural Resources Conservation Officers who regularly launch patrols from the park.

Fish habitat management and fish stocking (native species only) may be initiated in Six Mile Lake Provincial Park.

There is an existing baitfish harvesting license which applies to Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. In keeping with the direction provided in the *Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies (1992)* this license may continue, but new operations will not be permitted. Other commercial fishing is prohibited at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park.

7.4 Wildlife Management

Recreational hunting and commercial trapping are not permitted at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. On occasion, the presence or behaviour of animals may conflict with park management objectives. The control of nuisance animals will be carried out as required and according to provincial policies and regulations. Efforts to minimize the occurrence of nuisance animals may continue through the use of educational materials and messaging during natural heritage education programs.

Species inventories and research will be encouraged and pursued as opportunities arise. In particular, more detailed amphibian and reptile inventories may be completed to verify the presence of species at risk within the park (e.g. status of Eastern Hog-nosed Snake (*Heterodon platirhinos*) at Six Mile Lake is unclear).

7.5 Vegetation Management

Management of the park's vegetation communities will generally involve a 'hands-off' approach, allowing natural processes and succession to proceed unhindered. Sensitive communities will be protected from development and human traffic. Routine maintenance, including the removal of hazard trees and brushing of trails and roadways will be permitted. Control of invasive species may also occur.

Insect and disease infestations which threaten the park's vegetation communities may also be controlled in accordance with provincial policies.

In the development zone, planting of appropriate native species as part of minor rehabilitation

efforts around campsites and park facilities will be permitted. Aquatic growth may be controlled in the beach areas in accordance with the park operating plan.

Large scale efforts to control non-native and invasive species, or rehabilitate or alter vegetation communities will require the preparation of a detailed vegetation management plan. Further inventory and study will be encouraged and pursued as opportunities arise, especially relating to the park's aquatic communities, mosses and lichens.

7.6 Fire Management

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is located in the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Fire Management Zone under the *Forest Fire Management Strategy for Ontario (2004)*.

Fire management objectives for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park are to prevent loss of life, personal injury and socio-economic disruption; and to minimize loss or damage to park property and infrastructure.

Given the capital investment in facilities within the park, and the degree of private development adjacent to the park, fires in all zones will be suppressed.

Fire response will be conducted in accordance with the *Fire Management Policy for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves (2004)*. All fires will receive full response and sustained action until extinguished.

Response for structural fires and forest fires is guided by a municipal forest fire management agreement between the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Township of Georgian Bay.

Depending on the fire hazard, restrictions on open fires may be implemented by the park superintendent in consultation with the local MNR fire office and the township fire chief.

Fire response activities will be conducted in a manner that minimizes ecological damage whenever feasible.

The use of fire through prescribed burning may be considered to achieve ecological or hazard reduction objectives. Plans for any prescribed burns will be developed in accordance with the *Prescribed Burn Planning Manual* (1997), and applicable policies and legislation.

7.7 Cultural Resources

A cultural resources inventory for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park will be completed as funds become available. In the interim, cultural study of the park and surrounding area by qualified groups and individuals will be encouraged. Site-specific study will be completed prior to any future development involving significant ground disturbance.

8.0 OPERATIONS POLICIES

A park operating plan will be prepared to provide park staff with the necessary information required to operate the park on a day-to-day basis. In addition to addressing the operations policies described below, the plan will include topics such as budgeting, staffing, maintenance, fire response, enforcement and emergency services. The plan will be consistent with the approved *Ontario Provincial Parks: Minimum Operating Standards*, and will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

8.1 Natural Heritage Education

The Natural Heritage Education (NHE) program at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park will provide visitors with opportunities to learn about and interact with the natural environment through interpretation and recreation. The NHE program will be reviewed on an annual basis.

A natural heritage education plan outlining interpretive programming for the park may be prepared.

The park presently offers a seasonal level of NHE service, with an emphasis on self-use facilities such as trails and personal contact through the interpretive centre and structured

programs. The three components of NHE include information, interpretation and recreation.

8.1.1 Information

Information concerning the park, facilities and services, and points of interest in the greater region will be provided to park visitors. A variety of media will be used to convey this information, including the annual park information guide, signs, bulletin boards and displays, and personal contact. Information will be available primarily at the park gate house, interpretive centre, and will be provided at locations throughout the park as required.

8.1.2 Interpretation

Interpretive themes identified for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park may include:

- Canadian Shield ecology;
- logging history of Six Mile Lake and Severn River;
- settlement history of Six Mile Lake and Little Go Home Bay;
- art in the park – (e.g. David Milne);
- outdoor recreation – canoeing and kayaking; and
- species at risk and their habitat.

Messages developed around these themes will be conveyed to park visitors through publications, the interpretive centre, structured programs, and the self-guided *The Living Edge* interpretive trail.

8.1.3 Recreation

The NHE program does not provide structured opportunities for visitors to develop their recreational skills. However, the park does support and encourage a variety of recreational activities, through the provision of a hiking trail, boating facilities, fishing equipment, and canoe rentals.

8.2 Recreation Management

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park received approximately 61,300 visitors annually between 2000 and 2004. Most of these were campers

from southern or central Ontario. Visitor surveys suggest that the main activities participated in are swimming, fishing, hiking, casual play and nature appreciation.

While these activities are generally non-intrusive, any activity found to have significant adverse effects on the park's natural features will be controlled. Appropriate actions might include temporary or complete suspension of an activity, spatial relocation, mitigation and rehabilitation.

Campsites will be monitored for erosion and degradation, and may be temporarily closed for rehabilitation as required. Campsite closures and rehabilitation will comply with Ontario Park's standards and guidelines governing capital development.

The hiking trail will be similarly monitored, and sections may be temporarily closed to prevent erosion, trampling, rutting and widening. A new trail will be developed in NE1 to provide visitors with further opportunities for hiking and nature appreciation.

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park is closed during the winter season, but does support limited informal winter use for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Snowmobile use along a temporary trail has been permitted by a memorandum of understanding since 1999. This plan will allow for the establishment of a permanent route (Section 9.3).

Six Mile Lake Provincial Park supports canoeing activities by providing canoe rentals and by encouraging canoe safety through the NHE program. The park provides access to the Gibson-McDonald canoe route.

Information may be provided to anglers and boaters to promote responsible practices.

All-terrain-vehicles (ATVs) are prohibited in the park.

8.3 Tourism Services

The park store provides a range of goods and services, including ice, firewood, canoe and fishing equipment rental, and camping and grocery supplies.

8.4 Research

Research by qualified individuals and groups will be encouraged. All research must be approved and conducted in accordance with provincial park policy on research activities in parks.

The *Central Zone Research and Information Strategy (2004)* details priorities for future projects at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park, which include more detailed inventories of the park's wetland communities and reptile and amphibian populations. However, research may deal with all aspects of the park's earth and life science resources, cultural resources and history, recreational activities, and visitor groups.

8.5 Marketing

A marketing plan will be prepared for the park and will focus on the following priorities:

- increasing the occupancy rate by encouraging longer stays and promoting shoulder season and mid-week camping; and
- increasing day use throughout the season by attracting visitors off Highway 400 for roadside picnicking and swimming.

These objectives may be addressed by promoting the park's existing and new facilities and services as they are established, its convenient location, and the opportunities available for canoeing, including using the park as a drop-off/pick-up for the Gibson-MacDonald route.

9.0 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

As a recreation class park, a significant level of facility development and maintenance is

required to support park use. Decisions regarding new development will comply with *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves* (Parks' Class EA) (2004). Development will be carried out in accordance with approved site plans, utilizing appropriate standards and in conformity with relevant legislation and policy. The following sections identify the facility development projects presently identified for the park.

Unnecessary undirected light pollution will not be allowed in any future development. Outdoor lighting will be limited to basic safety requirements and will be shielded when possible. This commitment recognizes the natural values provided by a pristine night sky.

9.1 Internal Roads

The presence of shallow soils and exposed bedrock in the park makes road maintenance an on-going requirement. Major reconstruction and upgrading of the campground roads is required and will be completed as funds permit.

9.2 Visitor Facilities

There are currently 29 vault privies and a shower building to serve park visitors (Figure 2). Privy upgrading will be an on-going activity. A trailer dumping and filling station is located in the south end of the park near the park office. Garbage and recycling are managed in a centrally located collection depot. Maintenance and upgrading of these facilities will be conducted as required.

A new comfort station, lift station and leaching bed are to be constructed in the campground area to provide campers with additional sanitary facilities. A new water treatment system will also be developed within the park to comply with Ministry of Environment regulations.

9.3 Trails

There is an existing 1 km self-use interpretive trail located in the park. A new trail will be developed in NE1 to provide visitors with further opportunities for hiking and nature

appreciation during the summer and snowmobiling during the winter.

A snowmobile trail will be established through NE1 and the development zone to provide access to the existing Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs' (OFSC) Trans-Provincial Trail System trail to the north and south of Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. This is a key trail in the OFSC system, representing the main route along the Highway 400 and 69 corridors between Orillia and Parry Sound. This trail will contribute to the OFSC's efforts to improve rider safety by relocating trails off traveled public roadways and water bodies. The temporary trail followed the park's main road up to Maple Campground upon which it veered easterly towards Haskett's Drive. The redundant sections of the temporary trail will be closed to snowmobile use upon establishment of the new north-south route. Where appropriate, this trail will form the basis for the new hiking trail to be established in NE1.

The proposed snowmobile trail was screened for its environmental impacts using Exemption Order MNR-59/2. Existing earth and life science inventories suggest that the proposed route will not adversely affect any significant natural features. An inspection of the general area of the proposed trail, undertaken by Ontario Parks in 2004, did not uncover any specific sensitive features (e.g. rare plants, nesting or denning sites). Snowmobile use in natural environment and development zones within recreation class parks is permitted by provincial park policy. A final site-level inspection of the proposed trail was undertaken in May 2005 by qualified Ontario Parks and MNR District staff to identify areas to avoid (e.g. rare plant(s) and critical reptile habitat).

Signage and/or structures may be erected to limit access to the snowmobile trail by other motorized vehicles such as all-terrain vehicles.

10.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The resource stewardship activities and development projects identified in the plan will be implemented according to annual funding allocations and the priorities established by Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. Where required by provincial park policy and the *Environmental Assessment Act*, Ontario Parks will undertake additional evaluation and consultation prior to the implementation of a project. The following list summarizes the main initiatives and activities proposed for the park at this time.

Resource Stewardship

- Completion of more detailed reptile and amphibian inventories
- Further study and inventory of the park's wetland communities
- Completion of a cultural resources inventory

Facility Development

- Development of a new comfort station, lift station, and leaching bed in the campground
- Establishment of a new water treatment and distribution system for the park
- Upgrading of campground roads and campsites
- Upgrading of vault privies and improve septic treatment facilities
- Replacement of boat launch and docks system
- Development of a new hiking trail in NE1
- Establishment of a snowmobile trail in NE1 and the development zone

Operational

- Preparation of a park operating plan
- Preparation of a marketing plan

11.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

An Invitation to Participate was issued in August 2003 to announce the beginning of the management plan review process for Six Mile

Lake Provincial Park and to solicit input on the terms of reference. The invitation was sent to adjacent landowners, parties with a known interest in the park and to those on Ontario Parks' mandatory contact list (200 individuals and organizations). The management plan review was also announced through newspaper notices in the Orillia Packet and Times and the Midland Free Press, bulletins at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park, and posting on the Environmental Bill of Rights' Environmental Registry. A 45-day period was provided to allow interested individuals and parties to submit comments. During this stage 19 telephone, email, and mail responses were received.

Stage two of the plan review process involved the compilation of a background information file containing a variety of reports and reference materials describing the park. These materials included earth and life science inventories, visitor statistics and survey data, a map of the proposed snowmobile trail, and Ontario Parks' planning and management policies. Release of the file was announced in December 2003 to those on an updated mailing list (203 individuals and organizations), through notices in the Orillia Packet and Times and the Midland Free Press, and posting on the Environmental Bill of Rights' Environmental Registry. The file was available for viewing at the offices of the Township of Georgian Bay, Ministry of Natural Resources' Parry Sound District, and Ontario Parks' Central Zone. A 60-day review and comment period was provided. During this stage, four telephone, email, and mail responses were received.

As part of stage three of the planning process, the preliminary park management plan was released on September 24, 2004 for a 45-day review and comment opportunity, which was announced through newspaper notices in the Orillia Packet and Times and the Midland Free Press and a posting on the Environmental Bill of Rights' Environmental Registry. The preliminary plan gave interested individuals and parties the opportunity to review and comment on the management policies and activities being put forward for Six Mile Lake Provincial Park. The plan was sent to those on an updated

mailing list (202 individuals and organizations). An information session was held September 25, 2004 in Six Mile Lake Provincial Park and was attended by 13 people. During this stage, nine telephone, email and fax responses were received.

Stage four involved the preparation of the recommended park management plan. All comments received during the previous phases of the process were fully considered in the preparation of this document. In summary, the major changes made between the preceding document and the final park management plan include the following:

- A minor extension of the northeast corner of the development zone to accommodate the possible installation of a remote leaching bed for the new comfort station,
- the allowance of fish habitat management and fish stocking (native species only),
- minimizing of unnecessary undirected light pollution in future developments, and
- the park boundary and park road network were updated to reflect the actual location of these features.

The approved park management plan was published and released in October 2005 in conjunction with a paid advertisement in the Orillia Packet and Times and the Midland Free Press. Mandatory contacts and all those persons or groups who directly contributed to the planning process (105 individuals and organizations) were sent a copy of the final document. A policy decision notice was posted on the Environmental Bill of Rights' Environmental Registry. The public has a 45-day opportunity to review the plan contents. This allows interested participants a final opportunity to determine if their concerns had been adequately considered and addressed, and to initiate an appeal of the plan contents where appropriate.

The approved *Six Mile Lake Park Management Plan* will be assessed every 10 years to determine the need for review. The plan may be

reviewed or amended sooner to address changing issues or conditions. A review may involve a reassessment of all or part of the plan, including classification, zoning, goal, objectives and all resource management, operations and development policies, while an amendment may be considered to address specific issues or needs.

All comments regarding the *Six Mile Lake Preliminary Park Management Plan (2004)* were considered during the development of the approved park management plan.

Reference copies of the terms of reference, preliminary management plan, approved park management plan and other supporting documentation will be retained on file at Six Mile Lake Provincial Park.

12.0 REFERENCES

Blachut, S. 1977. *Six Mile Lake Provincial Park Earth Science Inventory Checklist*.

Kershaw, M. 2001. *Life Science Inventory of Six Mile Lake Park Addition*. Sudbury: Devlin Eco-management Consulting Services.

Korol, B. 2004. *Six Mile Lake Proposed Snowmobile Trail Field Visit Report*. Huntsville: Central Parks Zone, Ontario Parks.

McIntyre, E. 2000. *Six Mile Lake 1999 Synoptic Trapnet Survey Report*. Parry Sound: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1987. *Huron District Crown Land Management Plan*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1990. *Six Mile Lake Provincial Park Management Plan*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1992. *Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies*. Toronto: Provincial Parks and Natural Heritage Policy Branch.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1992. *Ontario Provincial Parks: Minimum Operating Standards*. Toronto: Provincial Parks and Natural Heritage Policy Branch.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1992-2004. *Ontario Provincial Parks Statistics, 1992-2004*. Peterborough: Operations and Development Section, Ontario Parks.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1994. *Ontario Provincial Parks Management Planning Manual*. Toronto: Park Operations Section, Provincial Operations Branch.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1997. *Ontario Parks Research and Information Strategy: Setting Priorities*. Peterborough: Planning and Research Section, Ontario Parks.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1997. *Prescribed Burn Planning Manual*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 1999. *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2001. *Ontario Parks Park User Survey, Camper Statistical Summary 2000*. Peterborough: Planning and Research Section, Ontario Parks.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2001. *Ontario Parks Park User Survey, Day Visitor Statistical Summary 2000*. Peterborough: Planning and Research Section, Ontario Parks.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2004. *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2004. *Central Zone Research and Information Strategy*. Huntsville: Central Parks Zone, Ontario Parks.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2004.

Crown Land Use Policy Atlas. Retrieved January 23, 2005, from <http://crownlanduseatlas.mnr.gov.on.ca/>

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2004. *Fire Management Policy for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves* (PM 11.03.03). Peterborough: Planning and Research Section, Ontario Parks.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2004. *Forest Fire Management Strategy for Ontario*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2004. *Six Mile Lake Preliminary Park Management Plan*. Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Sharp, M. J. 1983. *A Reconnaissance Biological Inventory of Six Mile Lake Provincial Park*. Richmond Hill: Parks and Recreation Section, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.