

**French River Provincial Park**  
**Joint Management Advisory Committee Meeting**

**September 20, 2006 12:00 noon – 4:30 pm**  
**Mashkinonje Provincial Park and Meadow Springs Meeting Room , Alban, ON**

**Committee Members:** Leonard Dokis, Mike Palmer, Dave Minden,

**Also Present:** Karen Mikoliew (MNR Sudbury) Ed Chevrette, Chuck Miller

**Regrets:** Gerry Duquette Jr ( Dokis FN), Art Tworo (Cottager), Peter Rooney ( Friends of French Alternate) Paul Bewick (Ontario Parks), Leslie Joynt (Ontario Parks), (MNR Sudbury), Bart Brown (MNR Parry Sound), Randy Morrison (MNR North Bay), and Rob Hepburn (Peter Rooney – alternate)

**Missed Contacting:** All Contacted

Meeting began with lunch and followed by a 1 hour tour of Mashkinonje Provincial Park – Loudon Peatland Access and Boardwalk. The site meeting reconvened at the Meadow Springs Golf Club, Meeting Room after the tour.

Dave Minden notified the group that he might not be able to stay for the entire meeting so items related to the Upper French River should occur early in the meeting.

- 1) French River Park Tabloid – The tabloid was delayed by time commitments of Ontario Park staff and was not implemented for the 2006 summer season. The tabloid is still planned for 2007. It should be self financing and paid for from park revenue. The tabloid is important to deliver park management messages.

***RECOMMEDATION – Proceed with the tabloid for 2007***

- 2) Visitor Centre Operations –\$125,000 was allocated for visitor centre operations. The Centre did not open until mid-July and this should be sufficient funding for the 2006-07 season. We are getting between 550 and 700 visitors a day – slightly more than expected in our first year since the entrance sign is not yet installed. Estimated hydro cost of about \$40,000 annually are now estimated at about \$25,000. The Centre is open two shifts a day Victoria Day to Labour Day and one shift a day Labour day to Thanksgiving. Leslie Joynt has been assigned to get the building up and running. She has 3 adult entry staff, 3 student staff and 1 adult cleaning staff. 2 days a week in the summer an additional cleaner was sent over from Killarney Provincial Park and paid overtime. The staff were excellent – and included staff from First Nations, retired business owner and a former SEP that we were able to hire on to regular staff. Sales at the store have been strong and

should contribute to the operating budget. Several people wished to make donations to the Centre but a donation box has not yet been established. Ed Chevrette will be hired 3 days a week in the fall / winter to secure and maintain the site. Hours of work and patrols will be such that a routine will not be evident to potential burglars. Comments have been very favourable including “ a good expenditure of tax payers \$”

***RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: Congratulations and excellent job done and excellent staff. That the visitor centre strives for financial self sufficiency so that it is not subject fiscal constraints. It is important that the facility be properly maintained. Suggest that an entrance fee be considered or at a minimum a donation box. Off season security should be a priority for such a valuable facility.***

- 3) Park Operations 2006 – there was a little short fall in operations this summer with Assistant Park Superintendent off on sick leave and a new Park Warden in place. Previously there were 2 Park Wardens but this summer only 1. The new warden is excellent and knows his job and the River. We also lost our SEP student mid-summer to work in the visitor centre. The previous warden took a full time job and the other warden retired. The Assistant Park Superintendent is now back with a clean bill of health.

***RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: Changes are understandable.***

- 4) Boat Houses and / Commercial Marinas –MNR Sudbury did inventory the two storey boat houses along the French River a single helicopter flight. There are no immediate plans to implement the policy due to current District work priorities. The boat house issue also raises the issue of other residences and buildings on the shore reserves that are in the park – do they also require disposition? The issue is complicated by the fact that Ontario Parks policy does not allow for private use disposition in parks..

***RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: The marina operators are well aware of the policy. The heads-up has given marina operators an opportunity to make more efficient use of dock space. Expect this policy will be implemented in the future.***

- 5) Update First Nations Consultations – The First Nation advisory Committee has been very successful at the French River Visitor Centre (FRVC). Would like to have about 2 meetings a year and as when needed in between with the next meeting likely to occur in October. Items to discuss at the next meeting, FRVC children’s activity book, planting of sweet grass at MTO rehabilitated former parking lot, FN craft sales at FRVC and FN tourism promotion – information for kiosk machines. A new item for discussion could be how the FRVC could be used as an emergency facility – as it has potential to be powered by a generator – has a water and sewage system.

- 5) Update Mooring Permits – No progress since October 2005– mooring fees will not be implemented for 2006.

***RECOMMENDATION: Implementing mooring fees should be a priority. Boaters are using local emergency services, landfill sites etc but not making any contributions to the local communities they attend. It is also not fair to canoeists and kayakers who are paying fees. Revenue is important to look after the park. If possible implement mooring fees this summer.***

- 7) Map Reprint – The map is now available.

***RECOMMENDATION/ ADVICE: Looks good – glad to see campsites are numbered***

- 8) Regulation P110 – the park additions became official with the publishing of the Ontario Gazette on July 8, 2006. The new park map has the new park boundaries. The park will be immediately operational with camping fees. The Park Management Plan is up for renewal after 2013 – planning of the park additions will likely occur when the plan is reviewed.

- 9) Update Landfill / Garbage Trailers – Landfill site at Key River has been sold to the Municipality of Killarney, Hartley Bay Landfill is a Crown landfill contracted to the Municipality of Killarney, Delamere is now closed with all Municipality of French River garbage now going to Noelville. The Dokis Road land fill is a Crown landfill contracted to Riverview cottages. The Ontario Parks trailer at Wolseley Bay is to be checked to see if it is still needed at Wolseley Bay. Some illegal dumping of garbage at Dokis Road landfill – suspect residents on Monetville (not a park issue).

***RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: Hartley Bay has a private recycling pick up. Would like to see the Wolseley Bay trailer relocated to Hartley Bay and have it modified to accept recycling materials if it is not currently needed at Wolseley Bay. Otherwise things are OK at present.***

- 10) OLL Project Inventory and Pit Toilet Installation –Additional 100 pit toilets have been prefabricated. There is clearing of blow down trees still to occur from the July 17 – microburst storm – so crews this fall will clear blow down , install 40 pit toilets, inventory last 40 campsites not inventoried in fall of 2005. Need to decide what we are going to do on rock campsites on Lake Nipsisng, Upper French River and at Georgian Bay where soil for toilets is very limited.

- 11) Mashkinonje Provincial Park – 4 km of trail (8km return)and parking lot ready for use at Loudon Peatland Access. Another 30 km of trail should be ready for use this fall. Toured - present development at Loudon and future plans for Muskrat Creek and Samoset.

12) Adopt-a-campsite – Upper French River Cottage Association – a successful program that we would like to extend to other cottage associations. Delta Association does a 2 day spring clean up with barge. Removed a lot of garbage. Thanks to the Associations.

***RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: Continue to mention at other cottage association meetings. Advisory Committee (Upper French) member available to help in meetings with other associations. Map numbering is helpful to assign campsites to cottage owners***

13) Fishing Regulation Changes – new fishing regulations are about to be made law. This will see fewer management units. The French River Provincial Park from Georgian Bay to Chaudiere Dam will have special regulations. Items to note French River outside the park will have its general regulations, newly regulated areas at the Pickerel River now in FRPP are not included in the regulated park area of the fishing new regulations. Pike moves to open year round. There will be communication required to implement new regulations. Concerns pike open – may increase fishing infractions for closed species, fishing in Lower French River and entering via Pickerel River – may have folks claim Lower French River fish were caught in the Pickerel River. For the most part – an acceptable package. Input is likely too late now – but will still suggest that the new park boundary at the Pickerel River be used instead of the old park boundary.

***RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: Consultation at an earlier stage did occur – generally new fishing regulation reflects previous input.***

14) Water Management – well managed this year – after July low water with lack of rain. No discussion required.

15) Bottle Ban – There is a lot of broken glass that is very difficult to pick up – could a bottle ban be considered? One campsite this year took 2 people 1.5 hours to clean up – beer bottles thrown at a rock – some broken glass still had bottle caps on. Cuts are a significant number of emergency service response call outs

***RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: Implement a glass bottle ban on the land area of the park. Cans are acceptable. Plastic bottles are acceptable.***

16) Fire Danger Signs – 4 Signs made by Friends of the French River Heritage Park – installed at Riverview and Dokis Marina's. Signs made for Delta and Wolseley Bay not yet installed. Thanks to the Friends.

17) Forest Fires – Prime shoreline burned again this summer. Campers still leaving campfires burning. In one incident this summer MNR Fire took 2.5 hours to respond because a helicopter was getting a new radio installed but a ground crew was not dispatched for boat access to the fire. There are now fire pumps at Riverview, Harley Bay and on Georgian Bay – as well as many cottagers have private pumps – local people have arrived at fires very quickly – some pumps provided by the Municipality of Killarney.

There is a clear understanding that these are being used to hold fire sizes small until trained MNR crews arrive to put the fires out (think first aid until the ambulance arrives).

***RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: Implement a prevention plan – perhaps front page of new tabloid. Contact MNR Fire and advise of concern over response time and impacts on prime shoreline. Discuss with MNR fire – that local people do not want to fight forest fires but they do play an important role in holding the fire size small – until the trained MNR crews arrive – previously criticism for first responding.***

18) Stones / Jumping - Off French River Snowmobile Bridge – a safety concern to river users. Snowmobile club was advised. The club said they would make signs. In the mean time Ontario Parks put up signs – on dropping objects from bridge.

***RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: Advise snowmobile club of the problem. Suggest signs for jumping and throwing stones off the bridge. MNR should consider enforcement actions possible – Trespass to Property – engage in prohibited activity, Public Lands Act – disobey sign, Provincial Parks Act – littering.***

19) Measuring Water Levels – an information items – the Federal Government is switching its water level monitoring from river based gauges to satellite measurements.

20) Pins / Post Cards – Friends of the French - Post cards that were in storage at the park office have been taken to the Visitor Centre for sale – proceeds of the sales to the Friends. If anyone has a supply of the Friends pins we would also like to get these to the FRVC for sale. The Friends are investigating reissuing the pins and developing a ball cap. The Friends may implement once monies are received from new map sales.

***RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: Chuck – check with John O’Hara of the Friends to see if he has a supply of pins. Chuck to check with Leslie to insure information to prepare invoices has gone to John O’Hara – resorts have not received invoices for the new map.***

21) Next Meeting – to be set for March 21 - 12:00 to 4:30 pm, location to be announced – but at or near Dokis First Nation.