

DRAFT
French River Provincial Park
Joint Management Advisory Committee Meeting

September 20, 2007 12:00 noon – 4:00 pm
French River Provincial Park Visitor Centre, Alban, ON

Committee Members: Leonard Dokis, Mike Palmer, Dave Minden, Peter Rooney
(Alternate for Rob Hepburn), Mary Lemieux

Also Present: Ed Chevrette, Leslie Joynt, Chuck Miller

Regrets: Gerry Duquette Jr, Art Tworo
Paul Bewick (Ontario Parks), Bart Brown (MNR Parry
Sound), Randy Morrison (MNR North Bay), Ted Shannon
(MNR Fire), Karen Mikoliew (MNR Sudbury)

The site meeting occurred at the FRVC Meeting Room. Meeting began with lunch.

1) French River Park Tabloid – The tabloid was delayed by time commitments of Ontario Park staff and was not implemented for the 2007 summer season. The tabloid is still planned as a 2 year tabloid for 2008/09. The first edition will be funded by the park.

RECOMMEDATION – Proceed with the tabloid for 2008-9

SUGGESTION – look into doing a joint Killarney / French River and Mashkinonje tabloid to reduce work required by Ontario Parks staff - perhaps a 2 page insert that can be changed for each edition to make it park specific.

ACTION: Miller - Tabloid will be done for summer 2008-9

2) Visitor Centre Operations – Centre still well received – very busy - best day – exceeded 900 visitor count (likely missed another 200). Visitation will exceed 45,000 visits of last season. Open weekends May to 3rd Friday in June / 7- days a week 3rd Friday in June to 3rd Monday in September/ weekends 3rd Monday in September to Thanksgiving / then closed. Note that the FRVC parking lot nearly full day of meeting – a weekday – 200 plus visitors. A donation box was established and an upgraded donation box is in the plans. Donations to date are limited. The Pow-wow was very successful. MTO donated about \$200,000 worth of parking lot paving – a much improved situation – people – visually more comfortable walking to the centre on pavement than large gravel. We are hopeful for establishing 2 parking spaces for people with disabilities closer to centre.

ACTION: Joynt – established upgraded donation box.

ACTION: Miller – to seek disability parking space funding.

3) Park Operations 2007 – purchased a new motor for the boat in 2007 cost exceeded \$10,000. For 2008 should be able to afford another Park Warden again as revenues are up and there is no major operational purchase required. Excellent B-salary and student staff at the French River this summer. Litter problems on the river have significantly reduced, still some major problems with broken glass. About 15 charges laid for possession of open alcohol in motor boats. All campsite signs on Georgian Bay were removed by persons unknown. MNR –Sudbury District / Ontario Parks will have conservation officer presence on the river during the hunting season.

One drowning this in the park this summer (non-swimmer fell from boat at shoreline). Two rattlesnake bites to people and several dogs bitten. One person was picking berries when bitten – the second person was pointing out the snake to someone else when their pointing finger got too close. No bear problems.

ACTION: Miller – in tabloid mention the use of campsite signs by emergency staff to encourage people not to remove them.

4) Boat Houses (Residential) and Commercial Marinas – No plans to implement at this time – status quo.

5) Update Mooring Permits – No progress since October 2005– mooring fees will not be implemented for 2008. Still not fair for large boats to be free and moored to a campsite when canoeists and others have to pay.

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.

ACTION: Miller – Begin consultations with Georgian Bay boaters and North Bay boaters this year for implementation ASAP and full implementation for 2009 season.

6) New Map – The new map has numbered campsites and this has been very helpful to emergency service providers and park staff. There are a few circumstances that have been brought to the attention of Ontario Parks where private land has been regulated as park land and as such shows as park on the new map. Corrections will be made to the regulated boundary and future public maps. No changes to wholesale of the park map. If the French River Visitor Centre gets wholesale request they will pass these along to Ed Chevrette (local request) or to John O’Hara of the Friends (Toronto requests). The FRVC will take all the information to be able to send the request along – (i.e. the client requesting will not have to phone – 2-3 other people)

RECOMMENDATION/ADVICE: Provide free maps to Emergency Service providers, EMS (ambulance), air ambulance, police (OPP Noelville, Still River, West Nipissing, Dokis, Henvey Inlet, Coast Guard (in Britt) and MNR Fire Control on an annual basis each spring to replace any that may have gone missing over the winter.

7) Update Landfill / Garbage Trailers – 10 recycling bins have been short listed for capital purchase in 2008-09. We still need to find someone to take the material collected.

RECOMMENDATION/ADVICE: If someone is to accept recycled material – also consider extending service to other locations such as Hartley Bay.

ACTION ITEM – Miller- to discuss with Municipality of Killarney and /or private business.

8) OLL Project Inventory and Pit Toilet Installation – Limited OLL staffing this year and little progress on toilet establishment. Priority still for toilet installation this fall is for sites identified by the Upper French River Cottagers Association. The association was hoping for toilets on 20 of approximately 45 sites. OLL funding this year may allow for installation of about 5 toilets. Lands held under land use permit tenure at the park are in the process of being inventoried (only a few at the French River).

RECOMMENDATION: Install toilets.

ACTION: Miller- Chevrette- install 5 toilets in 2007 in Upper French River area.

9) Mashkinonje Provincial Park – A request for quote to install a parking lot on the west side of Highway 64 has been released – the Friends of Mashkinonje hope to start installation in October.

10) Fishing Regulation – slot sizes in Upper and Delta - French River seem to be having desired effect – good fishing this year. Central French River fishery has still not responded to slot limit changes.

ADVICE / COMMENTS: Cormorants are still a concern - if bio mass of bait fish in Georgian Bay is over eaten – may result in local fishery collapse and birds may move inland. Cormorants are regularly seen in Lake Nipissing (none 20 years ago) and along the French River. Some of the larger flocks on Georgian Bay seem more dispersed.

11) Water Management – River managed as per plans – with a little extra abundance of water in July. Note the French River was cited as a good example of water management to support walleye spawning and was used as a new model for water management on the Moon River.

12) Bottle Ban – New Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act now in place. Will request a change to regulations regarding a French River glass bottle ban.

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

13) Fire Danger Signs – Sign for FR Delta still at Riverview (Dokis) needs to be installed. Arrow on existing sign needs to be replaced.

ACTION: Chevette – get sign at Riverview taken to Hartley Bay and fix the broken arrow on existing sign.

14) Forest Fires – MNR fire response much improved this summer – more frequent use of water bombers has protected park resources. Assistance from MNR Fire crews with work at the French River Visitor Centre (tree removal) and on portages also much appreciated.

RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: Thank you - keep up the good work.

15) Stones / Jumping Off / French River Snowmobile Bridge – signs have been posted and use of the Trespass to Property Act – (disobey sign or verbal instruction) is understood by park enforcement staff. This seems to have resolved the problem for 2007.

16) Pins / Post Cards – Friends of the French - Products are being sold at the French River Visitor Centre.

17) Patrols Upper French River – patrolled in peak late July – early August season this year. Staff missed the Upper French River Cottager Association meeting this year as they were called away on an occurrence.

18) FRVC Special Event – a First Nations Pow-Wow / Metis Rendez-Vous was a very successful event – exceeding capacity for parking. A sharing of cultures did occur. Will meet shortly to review changes for next year's event – review parking space, information distribution as well as other items. The 2007 event was well supported by the local community and business – “Thank You” – and generated a small surplus fund to assist with a 2008 event.

19) NE Georgian Bay Trail Concept – No updates.

20) A new Water Quality Stewardship Council has been established – some base level data is being collected. An oxygen meter was donated to the group.

21) Hartley Bay Marina – the environmentally friendly bait buckets manufacturer has been sold and the bait buckets are not currently available.

22) A new Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act has been implemented (September 4, 2007). The biggest change is to enforcement officer's powers of arrest, search and seizure – new training will be required before Park Wardens exercise these new powers. To the public the general park rules are much the same for the French River.

23) Halton Recycling – This committee does not have direct information about a proposal to locate a leaf and yard recycling plant in the Municipality of French River north of Noelville along Hwy 535 based on a Toronto area supply. This project required a Municipal zoning change – which has occurred. The proposed plant is in the watershed of French River (Mashkinonje and West Sandy Island) Provincial Park(s). There has been vocal opposition to this proposal locally that has included water quality, air quality, tourism marketing and use of rural road concerns.

RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: Insure the French River (Mashkinonje / West Sandy Island) Provincial Park(s) water quality, air quality, and marketing as an eco-tourism destination are protected.

24) Delegation for Brazil – A group from Brazil will be at the French River and Killarney in October looking at the French River as a possible model for a park in Brazil. The French River was chosen to host the meeting because of the integration of the park and community – which is similar to the situation in Brazil.

RECOMMENDATION / ADVICE: Let us know if we can be of assistance in assist in facilitating the visit.

25) Next Meeting – to be set for April 17, 2008 noon to 4:00 pm at the French River Visitor Centre (or in Sturgeon Falls). Mid week - afternoon meetings seem to be a good time. April is better than March as other winter activities are still underway in March.