

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF ANGLERS & HUNTERS



Ontario Conservation Centre

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Mr. Trevor Gibb
Quetico Provincial Park Superintendent
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Regional Operations Division, Northwest Region
Atikokan Area Office
108 Saturn Avenue
Atikokan Ontario
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Dear Mr. Gibb:

Subject: EBR Registry Number PB06E2023: Quetico Provincial Park Management Plan Review

On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), its 100,000 members, subscribers and supporters, and 740 member clubs, we have reviewed the Preliminary Management Plan (Plan) for Quetico Provincial Park. The OFAH appreciates the opportunity to contribute to the Quetico Management Plan development process.

The OFAH supports a number of the changes proposed in the Plan. The motorized guiding will continue to provide opportunities to outdoors enthusiasts who are either unable to partake in back country angling opportunities, or wish to experience that style of angling. Some air access can contribute to sustainable development and contribute to efficient management and maintenance of sites and resources, so the OFAH supports allowing limited air access that does not impact other park values.

Our previous submissions in 2007, 2010, and 2013 have consistently provided advice and supporting evidence related to the potential benefits of increased low-impact resource-based recreation, specifically hunting, within the park. From contributing to the accomplishment of the socio-economic goals of the park management plan, to strategic use for the maintenance and enhancing of ecological integrity, regulated hunting opportunities have been used in numerous provincial parks as a means to help achieve a variety of park goals and values. The OFAH maintains that the management plan must keep regulated hunting opportunities available as a management tool. While our comments have been acknowledged in the past, we are disappointed in the continued absence of hunting from the Plan as a wildlife and valued management tool.

Quetico Provincial Park and the areas surrounding it have a rich history of recreational and sustenance hunting. Low-impact adaptive management tools like regulated hunting can significantly contribute to the fulfilment of multiple objectives including maintenance and protection of significant habitats, increasing utilization during shoulder seasons, and contribution to the local economies while not negatively impacting other values. Quetico already utilizes adaptive management tools, like motorized guiding and air access, which have resulted in significant improvement of certain values without significant negative impact to others. Additionally, this would fulfill commitments to objectives in the *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* by looking at the opportunity to provide additional hunting opportunities in existing provincial parks. Provincial Park classification should not be used as a means to prohibit park uses that can help to achieve park objectives.

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There are many examples of provincial parks and public areas with multi-use initiatives, including hunting opportunities. From controlled hunts to complete open access, parks provide crucial hunting opportunities to many Ontarians, and the hunting activities provide a variety of benefits to the parks where hunting occurs. Hunting has been used in areas to help mitigate human/wildlife conflict and nuisance animals, prevent species from exceeding carrying capacity, disease management, increase utilization during shoulder seasons, and many other purposes. The current utilization of the park for traditional harvest rights by First Nations without negative impacts should indicate the capacity the park has for hunting opportunities without negatively impacting other park values. Additionally, licensed hunting opportunities can contribute to better research and monitoring of both game and non-target species through the reporting mechanisms the MNRF utilizes with regulated hunters, while incentivizing investment into more monitoring and analysis of wildlife resources in the park by other areas within the MNRF.

Given the ecological, social, and economic benefits that could be achieved through licensed hunting in Quetico Provincial Park, and the support for it from the local public, the OFAH is disappointed that increasing hunting opportunities have not been pursued during this planning process. The obligation for public consultation related to hunting is specifically illustrated in Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy: "Where there is demonstrated local public support for hunting in existing wilderness parks, this will be addressed as part of planning for individual parks."

The OFAH does support several of the changes that are within the proposed Plan, and some of the changes that have occurred from the original proposals that were published for comment in years prior. That said, the OFAH recommends that further changes to the Preliminary Park Management Plan be pursued to enable active wildlife management be presented as a management tool.

We look forward to future opportunities to provide specific input on potential options for active wildlife management in Quetico Provincial Park.

Yours in Conservation,



Robert Cole
Land Use Policy & Habitat Specialist

RC/gh

cc: OFAH Board of Directors
OFAH Big Game Advisory Committee
OFAH Land Use/Access/Trails Advisory Committee
Angelo Lombardo, OFAH Executive Director
Matt DeMille, OFAH Manager, Fish & Wildlife Services
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