

CPAWS-OV SUBMISSION ON MANAGEMENT OF EGAN CHUTES NATURE RESERVE AND PROVINCIAL PARK RESERVE

16 January 2007

Attn Rob Claveriiing:

RE: EBR # PB05E4801.

EGAN CHUTES NATURE RESERVE AND EGAN CHUTES PROVINCIAL PARK ADDITION

The Ottawa Valley Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS OV) has been actively involved in wilderness and Parks protection for 37 years. We represent approximately 1500 members who are vitally concerned about parks and wilderness protection. The Egan Chutes area is of particular additional interest to us as it falls within the Algonquin to Adirondacks Project's area of concern; such areas are vital to the connectivity between the two large parks.

"The overriding consideration in the management and future development of the Park must be the protection of the existing natural values. This will require keeping the recreational use within existing areas and at the current relatively low level." p30, Life Science Survey.

Ecologically, the greater park ecosystem should be considered in park management plans. In this case, the two Egan Chutes Parks, the Conroys Marsh and Little Mississippi River Conservation Reserves, and the river bed and water column of the York River should be considered together. CPAWS OV supports this suggestion in the Management Guidelines p2 of the Egan Chutes and Egan Chutes Addition Interim Management Statement.

CPAWS OV strongly urges Ontario Parks to follow through on the statement, on p10 of the The Egan Chutes and Egan Chutes Addition Interim Management Statement, that: "Ontario Parks will attempt to establish more ecologically meaningful boundaries along the York River addition, especially in relation to significant communities, through the OLL Forest Accord's Room to Grow initiative." The proposed boundaries for the Egan Chutes Addition do not incorporate any of the smallish additions proposed in the Life Sciences Survey p 30. CPAWS OV regards this as unacceptable, especially considering the ample timelines involved (Life Sciences Survey, 2002; Interim Management Statement, 2004; and planning documents, late 2006).

The case for changing the boundaries of the waterway park is plain. From p35 of Ontario Provincial Parks - Planning and Management Policies: "As such, boundaries must be at least 200 metres from the shoreline (normally the high water mark), and should take into account lines of sight, proximity of landforms, and ecological integrity. The 200 metres should be treated as a minimum standard - wider corridors where appropriate, or large nodes to protect concentrations of significant features are both real considerations." The recommendations of

the Life Science Survey should be easily possible to accomplish within the above parameters. The Life Science Survey recommends the inclusion of wetlands amounting to 65ha by adjusting the “simplistic line” of the “arbitrary 200 metre limit from the shoreline”. Additionally the Life Science Survey recommends a “buffer of 120 metres . . . for all riverine wetlands”, an area amounting to a further 161ha. Since the land involved is all, or nearly all Crown Land, CPAWS OV urges the adjustment of the Egan Chutes Addition to include the recommended areas.

The Egan Chutes Nature Reserve Park and the Egan Chutes Park Addition are small, with a combined area of approximately 1130ha. Between them, they contain unique geological features, of great interest to mineral collectors, which are of local, regional and provincial significance. CPAWS OV supports the recommendations in the Earth Science study by Duba and Frey, including ledge overhang corrections, fencing, signage and access restrictions. Although it does not form a complete prescription to park management, CPAWS OV supports the report, (p 10), when it concludes: “Protecting the natural integrity and stopping the destruction of already damaged outcrops should form the basis of management planning for the park. Adequate controls and regulations should be implemented and enforced to stop further damage to these extremely valuable components of Ontario’s geological record.” There are similar conclusions drawn on pages 13 and 16 of the report’s other stages.

CPAWS OV opposes all proposals for consumptive activities in provincial parks; specifically, we oppose the suggestion of “. . . developing the nature reserve as a mineral theme park.” (p16, Egan Chutes and Egan Chutes Addition, Interim Management Statement).

Although it has been suggested that the two parks be amalgamated into one waterway class park, CPAWS OV supports their continued separation. We feel that the continued protection and nature reserve status of the Egan Chutes Nature Reserve will be more maintainable if the parks are separate. Additionally, the suggestions to change the nature reserve to a waterway class park with up to six separate nature reserves do not make sense for a park of only 322ha. For the “good” or “valuable” life science features to survive, they need to be imbedded in an area of full protection much larger than their immediate area of occurrence. Isolated islands of protection usually fail to protect that which is contained within them over the longer period.

CPAWS OV supports, in the Egan Chutes Nature Reserve, the phasing out of bait fishing and commercial fishing by 1 January 2010. CPAWS OV opposes, in general, “vegetation management”, and also, in general, new water control structures. We support the rest of the recommendations in the Activity section of the Crown Land Use Atlas - Policy Report for the Egan Chutes Nature Reserve.

CPAWS OV, for the Activity section of the Crown Land Use Atlas - Policy Report for the Egan Chutes (Addition), supports the “No” comments. We recommend changing “Maybe” to “No” in the Commercial Activities and in the Land and Resource Management Activities sections, except for Prescribed Burning and Fire Suppression. CPAWS OV opposes consumptive commercial activities within parks, and recommends that they be phased out as the opportunity arises. In the Science, Education and Heritage Appreciation section, CPAWS OV supports these activities, but opposes the creation of support facilities. In the Recreation Activities and

Facilities section CPAWS OV supports the non-consumptive activities, including camping, non-mechanized recreation travel and personal use fishing, and opposes the consumptive and/or mechanized activities. This support is contingent upon the allowed activities being kept at a low level, as recommended by the Life Sciences Survey. p30.

CPAWS OV supports the Life Science Survey recommendations, p30, on protecting the fens, on using care with hiking trails and/or roads, on beaver control and on ATV control. It is pleasing to see, in the Life Science Survey, the statement, p 30, concerning ATVs: "This '4X4' crowd tends not to have much appreciation for undisturbed natural values."

RE: THE EGAN CHUTES AND EGAN CHUTES ADDITION INTERIM MANAGEMENT STATEMENT.

CPAWS OV supports the inclusion of the bed of the York River into the Parks, p2 & p4, and recommends that this portion of the Park be extended to the Conroys Marsh Conservation Reserve. For greater certainty, the water column should also be specifically included in the Park.

CPAWS OV supports the deadline of 31 December 2009 to remove the hunt camp from the Park, although an earlier date would be preferable. p6.

CPAWS OV opposes commercial consumptive activities within parks. We oppose the commercial baitfish operations, traplines and Bear Management Areas (death zones for bears) in the Park, and urge their retirement as the opportunities arise. p11.

CPAWS OV opposes the use of mechanized transport in parks. The designated areas for motorboats should be restricted. p13.

CPAWS OV supports the restrictions which apply to nature reserve class parks. p13.

CPAWS OV supports the ban on baitfish in waterway class parks. p14.

CPAWS OV urges a quota system on the existing four camp sites. With only four sites, overcrowding, with its attendant inimical ecological and sanitary consequences, is bound to happen. p14. See also the recommendations of the Life Sciences Survey, p 30, which recommends ". . . keeping recreational use within existing areas and at the current low level."

RE: CONROY'S MARSH

CPAWS OV opposes the suggestion of an Ontario Parks partnership with Ducks Unlimited to "improve" Conroys Marsh, presumably in favour of ducks, on the grounds that it is impossible

to improve on the ecological functioning a natural marsh. Whatever way Nature decides to do it is, by definition, the best way.

Yours truly