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Halifax, Nova Scotia
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Item No. 10.1.3

Halifax Regional Council
January 22, 2008

TO: Mayor Kelly and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan English", written over a horizontal line.

Dan English, Chief Administrative Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne Anstey", written over a horizontal line.

Wayne Anstey, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 27, 2007

SUBJECT: Blocked Old Sambro Road Access to Long Lake Provincial Park

ORIGIN

Several Letters have been written on behalf of Council and at the request of Councillor Adams regarding the Province's action of blocking off of the parking access to Long Lake Provincial Park at the Old Sambro Road in Spryfield.

On January 16, 2007, Regional Council approved Councillor Adam's motion for a staff report examining potential partnerships with the Province or transferring the lands to HRM to provide access.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that HRM continue to cooperate with the Province and the community-based Long Lake Provincial Park Association to determine lake access for boat launching purposes in the vicinity of Old Sambro Road by way of the Long Lake Provincial Park Management Plan.

BACKGROUND

Long Lake Provincial Park was designated under the *Provincial Parks Act* in 1984. The *Act* mandates the NS Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop, fund, and operate provincial parks.

In 2006 DNR blocked an access road from the Old Sambro Road to the Long Lake Dam at the SE corner of Long Lake Provincial Park (Appendix A). The rock blockade was intended to prevent chronic illegal dumping activities at the site. Although the action was successful, local boaters were deprived of a convenient launch area. Local councillors were contacted and the issue was brought to Regional Council.

Subsequent to Council's motions there were discussions with DNR (Provincial Park) staff. Although DNR was unwilling to remove the rock barrier, due to ongoing concerns regarding illegal dumping, HRM staff continued to take part in a planning partnership with the community-based Long Lake Provincial Park Association (LLPPA), and DNR to develop a park management plan. In the Spring of 2006 the LLPPA initiated a public consultation process with a public meeting to discuss park planning. Over 100 participants completed park planning questionnaires (Appendix B) distributed at the Long Lake Provincial Park Open House hosted by the LLPPA. Public input was reviewed by the planning group for several months and in January, 2007 DNR produced a draft park management plan. The draft was reviewed by the planning group and DNR staff received approval to proceed with a second draft. It is expected that, subject to the approval of the LLPPA, DNR will issue a management plan early in 2008 to be followed with another round of public review.

DISCUSSION

The planning process and public consultation for the park management plan was led by the LLPPA with assistance from DNR and HRM staff. The plan's vision is as follows:

Long Lake Provincial Park will ensure the long-term protection of important natural and cultural heritage values while providing opportunities for compatible outdoor recreation and nature-based education. The park will serve as a regional day-use park emphasizing high-quality front and backcountry hiking experiences as well as other forms of extensive recreation. The provision of facilities and services will be restricted to a level which will maintain the park's heritage values but still allow the public to enjoy and appreciate the park's natural setting. This development will only be permitted in sections of the park outlined in the management plan.

The development plan for the park provides further details on how the vision is to be achieved:

Park development provides the facilities and infrastructure necessary to ensure appreciation and enjoyment of the park. In light of the primacy placed on the protection of park values, the Department of Natural Resources and its partners will provide only limited facilities and services within Long Lake Provincial Park. The

main focus of park development will be the provision of public access nodes, a high quality trail system and orientation / interpretive information. Any infrastructure development must support park goals and objectives.

The draft plan goes on to identify key access points to the park:

Public access will be provided at several clearly defined locations. One or more of these entry locations will be accessible from the public transit system. For the most part, these entry points will be located north of the Old St. Margarets Bay Road. Exceptions include the proposed hiking trail from the Terence Bay Wilderness Area, pedestrian access to Spruce Hill Lake from the Old Sambro Road and a new parking area off the Old Sambro Road. Where appropriate, park entrances and associated trails will connect with HRM's regional trail and active transportation systems. Access points will be sited and designed to minimize their impacts on park values.

The draft proposes that vehicular access to the dam access road from Old Sambro Road would be limited to canoe and kayak launching only. Approval from the HRM Traffic Authority regarding access and egress safety was cited as a prerequisite for adoption of this proposal.

HRM staff, approached the Traffic Authority for a safety review and the access was approved. Notice of approval has been conveyed to DNR.

DNR has a clear responsibility under the Provincial Parks Act to provide the financial means to develop and operate Long Lake Provincial Park. The role of the LLPPA and HRM is to provide non-financial support to the planning and management efforts of DNR. The community-based LLPPA, with the support of HRM, has provided ongoing leadership in public engagement, and the development of the Long Lake Provincial Park Management Plan. As stated previously, the plan is expected to be released for public review, and LLPPA approval, early in 2008. The planning partnership established by the LLPPA with DNR, and HRM is a fine example of community-based planning. The draft plan appears to have resolved the issue of boat launch access thereby eliminating the need for HRM to consider the acquisition of Crown land and/or funding the development of a parking lot. At this point it would be best for HRM to not intervene in this ongoing planning process and to continue in its partnership role with the community and DNR.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial commitments associated with this report's recommendation.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES / BUSINESS PLAN

This report complies with the Municipality's Multi-Year Financial Strategy, the approved Operating, Capital and Reserve budgets, policies and procedures regarding withdrawals from the utilization of Capital and Operating reserves, as well as any relevant legislation.

ALTERNATIVES

- A** Regional Council could choose to renew efforts to negotiate directly with DNR to have the rock barrier removed. DNR could agree but this action could be perceived as undermining the long-term efforts of the LLPPA to produce a comprehensive management plan for the park. It could also be inconsistent with park access recommendations contained in the second draft of the plan expected to be released early in 2008.

- B** Regional Council could choose to acquire the subject property from DNR and establish a boat launch. DNR could agree but this action could be perceived as undermining the long-term efforts of the LLPPA to produce a comprehensive management plan for the park. It could also be inconsistent with park access recommendations contained in the second draft of the plan expected to be released early in 2008.

ATTACHMENTS


Appendix A - Map of Long Lake Provincial Park

Appendix B - Long Lake Provincial Park Planning Open House Survey

A copy of this report can be obtained online at <http://www.halifax.ca/council/agendasc/agenda.html> then choose the appropriate meeting date, or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 490-4210, or Fax 490-4208.

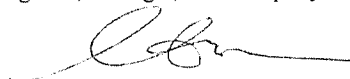
Report Prepared by: John Charles, Planner, Real Property Planning, Infrastructure & Asset Management 490 5771

Report Approved by:



Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning, Infrastructure & Asset Management 490-6047

Financial Approval by:

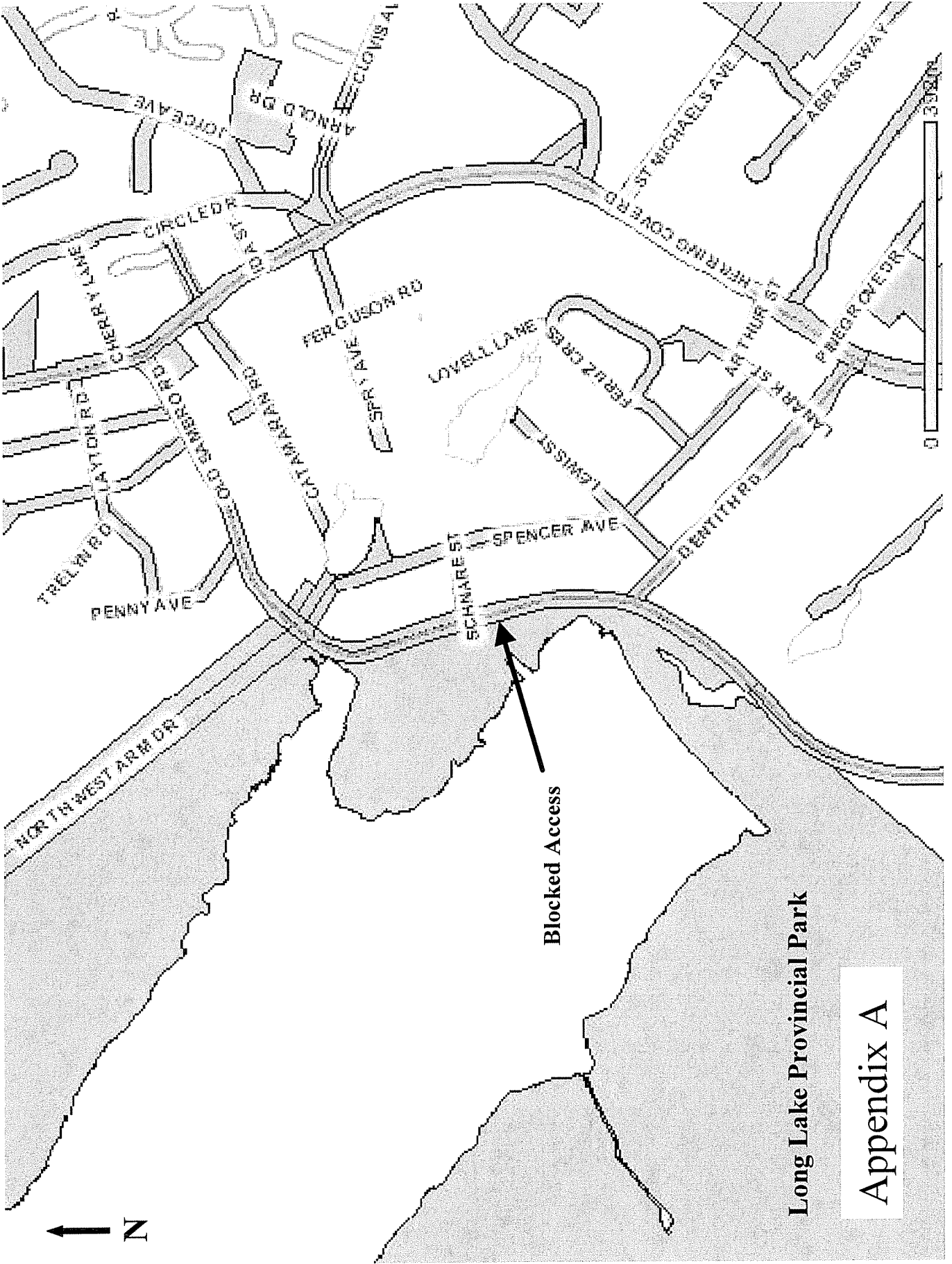


Catherine Sanderson, Senior Manager, Financial Services 490-1562

Report Approved by:



Cathie O'Toole, Director, Infrastructure & Asset Management 490-4825



Blocked Access

Long Lake Provincial Park

Appendix A

LONG LAKE Provincial Park **PLANNING** **OPEN HOUSE**

Introducing

Long Lake Provincial Park

Nova Scotia has a rich diversity of natural places: seashores, cliffs, mountains, rivers, lakes, wetlands, coastal barrens, and forests of softwoods and hardwoods.

Nova Scotians have a great fondness for this natural heritage, and our governments have created several legal and other means to protect examples of this diverse natural heritage. Our protected areas include: provincial parks

*Parks
serve
several
purposes*

under the Parks Act, protected wilderness areas under the Wilderness Areas Act, as well as other conservation vehicles. Areas set aside by these legislative means serve several purposes: human recreational space, ecological conservation areas, and sites of spiritual value

In addition to these traditional methods of protecting land, in recent years governments have begun to encourage stewardship of natural places, including community stewardship of protected areas such as provincial parks

The Park

For over a century prior to the creation of the park, the land and lakes were part of Halifax's water supply system.

In the 1970's, the City of Halifax had outgrown the capacity of these watershed lands to supply sufficient water, and so water the larger Pockwock Lake was adopted. It was decided to create a natural park on the old watershed lands, which had been kept in pristine condition so as to ensure water quality.

Long Lake Provincial Park was ultimately created by the Nova Scotia government on October 9th 1984 by Order in Council 84-1189. The park was not created with the usual fanfare associated with a decision of this sort. No special funding was set aside, nor was there an agreed plan for the development of the park. Instead, the land was protected under the Parks Act so that it would be used for park purposes in the future, and would not be developed for other uses. The area

*The lands
were kept
in pristine
condition*

set aside in this way consisted of 2,095 hectares. At the time, this was Nova Scotia's largest provincial park.

Ecologically, the park is typical of the natural region in which it is found. It lies in the "Atlantic Interior" theme region as defined in the Natural History of Nova Scotia, but tends also to capture some elements of the nearby "Atlantic Coast" theme region. Granite bedrock underlies the entire park. There are some small well-drained drumlin hills with the capability to support hardwood forests. There are also many wetland areas. Wetter parts of the landscape that have relatively poor soils are mostly covered with second-growth spruce forests.



Due to the proximity to a large urban centre, the park has become popular for outdoor recreation, including hiking, biking, boating and swimming. Most of the visitors enjoy finding themselves in a natural space, and surveys have indicated that keeping the park in a natural condition, while also making it easy to visit, are of most importance in future management.

Shortly after the park had been set aside legally, the Province put up signs around its perimeter. The signs stated that there was a provincial park, and that there was to be no hunting, trapping, or use of off-road vehicles. These prohibitions are all specified in the laws that apply to provincial parks in Nova Scotia.

The Association

On discovering that the provincial park had been created, a group of citizens in Spryfield near the park decided to create an association to foster community-based stewardship of the park. The organization was initially incorporated under the Societies Act of Nova Scotia on June

9th 1987. The Long Lake Provincial Park Association (LLPPA) has the following official purposes:

*The
Association
has called
for public
meetings*

1. "To advocate and assist with the development of Long Lake Provincial Park in ways which serve the interests of local citizenry and communities"

2. "To promote and assist with the protection and conservation of the natural resources of Long Lake Provincial Park so that they may continue to be enjoyed indefinitely and in all seasons."

In essence, the founding members of the LLPPA wanted the land to stay as a park, and wanted to ensure that local people would be involved in making decisions about how the park would be managed. The Association has therefore called public meetings to discuss the drafting of a management plan for the park. This has been done with the cooperation of Halifax Regional Municipality and the provincial Department of Natural Resources.

**Turn page for
Open House questions...**

Now tell us what YOU think about the Park!

Please look at the various maps posted about the room and either write down your comments, or share your thoughts with one of the LLPPA volunteers who are recording public feedback.

Park access and entrances, for example:

Where do people enter?

Are the entrances located in appropriate and safe places?

Should there be more or fewer entrances?

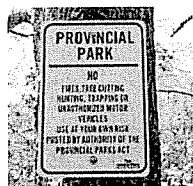


Activities and infrastructure, for example:

Where should the parking lots and washrooms be located?

Which recreational activities should be planned for?

Should there be interpretive signs on trails?

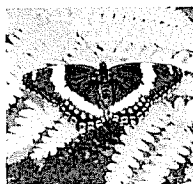


Safety, for example

What are the main safety issues?

How can we reduce forest fires?

Who will enforce safety regulations?



Ecology and culture, for example

Which natural areas in the park are most sensitive and need the most protection?

Where are the important historical features and how should they be protected?

What are the long term threats to the park's ecological integrity?



Zoning and trails

How should the park be zoned between conservation and recreation areas?

Where should the trails go?

What recreational management issues need to be considered?



Adjacent land uses

How does the park fit into the regional system of parks?

Can the park plan enhance economic and community development near the park?

Is the park big enough for all future uses?

The Long Lake Provincial Park Association (LLPPA) is working cooperatively with DNR to prepare a management plan for Long Lake Provincial Park. As part of the planning process, DNR staff and LLPPA representatives have been examining a wide range of scientific, historical, and cultural information collected from many relevant sources. In addition, park users and the general public have been invited to participate in an ongoing consultative process. Anyone with an interest in the park is encouraged to become involved.

In preparing the plan, issues of concern and opportunities for park uses will be identified, and various management options considered. When completed, the plan will identify appropriate management measures and the best way to achieve these. The planning process will provide further opportunities for public review and comment to help ensure that all views are considered.

Long Lake Provincial Park Association Park Planning Survey

****SEE REFERENCE MAP ON THE OTHER SIDE****

the back of the survey to add extra comments. Please either leave the survey (*this sheet only—hold on to the other sheet*) at the table by the entrance as you leave, or send it to: LLPPA, 40 Rockingstone Road, Halifax, NS B3R 2C6. Surveys can be downloaded from www.gov.ns.ca/natr/parks/longlake/default.htm and emailed to Department of Natural Resources planner Brian Kinsman at bkinsman@gov.ns.ca.

1. Access and entrances

Which of the following is a high priority for you:

- Location of park entrances
- Quantity of park entrances
- Safety of park entrances
- other [please add] _____

2. Activities and infrastructure

Which of the following is a high priority for you:

- Parking lots and washrooms
- Recreational activities
- Interpretive signage
- other [please add] _____

3. Safety

Which of the following is a high priority for you:

- forest fires
- vandalism and hooliganism
- enforcement
- water safety
- other [please add] _____

4. Ecology and culture

Which of the following is a high priority for you:

- sensitive ecosystems
 - historical features
 - ecological integrity
 - other [please add] _____
-

5. Zoning and trails

Which of the following is a high priority for you:

- park zoning between conservation and recreation
- placement and design of trails
- recreational management
- other [please add] _____

We would like to have your feedback about park planning issues and priorities.

The information will be used to help guide the development of the park management plan. Please fill out this anonymous survey. There is space on

plan. Please fill out this anonymous survey. There is space on

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6. Adjacent land uses

Which of the following is a high priority for you:

- Long Lake park and the regional parks system
 - enhancing the local economy and communities
 - expanding the park
 - other [please add] _____
-

7. I live:

- west of the park along Prospect Road or Hubley
- east of the park in Spryfield and Harrietsfield region
- elsewhere in Halifax
- other [please name] _____

8. I usually enter the park:

- in Goodwood
- at the parking lot on St. Margaret's Bay Road
- at the entrance near Cowie Hill Road
- near the Long Lake dam
- in the region of Rockingstone Road
- in Harrietsfield to go to Spruce Hill Lake dam
- in Harrietsfield near the trailer park
- other [please name] _____

9. I use the park for:

- hiking, walking, jogging
 - cross-country skiing
 - observing wildlife
 - dog walking
 - mountain biking
 - swimming, canoeing, fishing
 - other [please name] _____
-

. . . I have not been there yet.

