Ontario’s Living Legacy

Report: One Year Later, the Harris Government Gets a Failing Grade: March 30, 2000

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Phrases like Lands for Life (now the Ontario’s Living Legacy) are “extreme kinds of greenwash... that promote falsehood as the truth.... The title itself gives the impression that this is a positive process. In fact, the reported favourite option of the government is to turn most of this vast region over to the private sector to manage under the rules of the global marketplace. Just how this would generate more life on these lands is never explained, and indeed turning these lands over to the private sector to manage would certainly result in far less life and more death for many species and ecosystems than ever in the past. But the phrase does reveal the influential power of greenwash.”

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ontario Living Legacy decision will determine the fate of 46 million hectares of Crown Lands of Ontario, almost half of the provinces land base. One year ago, on March 30, 1999, the Harris government announced its Ontario Living Legacy (OLL) decision which set aside only an additional 4.5% for parks and protected areas (on top of the 7.5% that was already protected for a total of 12%). This report reviews and evaluates the governments policies in both the 12% of land set aside for parks and protected areas in parts of central and northern Ontario, and the other non-protected 88% land base in the OLL region.

This report argues that:

• The quantity of protected areas under the OLL is grossly insufficient. Implementation of the Ontario Living Legacy will create a landscape of disparate protected islands (habitat patches), with poor landscape connectivity, set in an industrial sea of mining activities, clearcuts, and chemical-intensive tree farms. This does not bode well for the preservation of ecological systems or the movement of wildlife.

• Within the areas that are protected, the Harris government cannot be trusted to uphold the meaning of protection. The primary purpose of parks is to preserve biodiversity. All other uses should be secondary. In contrast, the new parks created under the OLL decision allow high impact activities, such as mining, sport hunting, commercial trapping, and snowmobiling.

• There is a lack of transparency behind the OLL process, despite claims to the contrary. This results in public participation being seriously compromised.

Part of the purpose of the report is to examine not just what has happened in the Ontario Living Legacy process, but to sound the alarm bells on where the Harris government is heading. For example, we find that the anti-environmental Wise Use Movement agenda from the U.S. is gaining ground in Ontario with the assistance of the Harris government. The Harris Tories have promised to introduce a Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act which would give sport hunters the right to hunt.

The report recommends that mining, sport hunting and fishing, and other high impact activities be banned in all parks and protected areas as a first step. Further, we urge the government to set conservation biology targets for land protection in order to ensure the long-term viability of ecosystems, species and genetic diversity in the province (anywhere between a third and a half of the land base, according to conservation biologists). Instead of promoting single species (or game) management, the government should adopt an ecosystem management approach which respects natural predator-prey relations, and promote nonconsumptive uses of Ontario’s wildlife, rather than sport hunting. Finally we urge the government to restore funding to the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources, and Ontario Parks, re-establish public control of our natural heritage, and re-assert full public participation.
BACKGROUND

One year ago, on March 30, 1999, the Harris government announced the Ontario Living Legacy (OLL) decision just prior to an election call. The decision followed a two-year land use planning process called Lands for Life which covered almost half the provinces land base in parts of central and northern Ontario. The fate of 46 million hectares of Crown Lands in Ontario was decided in one fell swoop. An additional 4.5% of the land was set aside for parks and protected areas (on top of the 7.5% that was already protected for a total of 12% of the OLL area). The added protected areas are not really protected (except from logging), since mining, sport hunting and fishing, commercial trapping and snowmobiling will be allowed.

At the same time, the other non-protected 88% land base is under serious threat from wide-scale forest clearcutting and mining. The Harris government also negotiated a Forest Accord with the logging industry and the Partnership for Public Lands (the World Wildlife Fund, Wildlands League and Federation of Ontario Naturalists). The Accord reduces the possibility of increasing the amount of protected areas beyond the 12% political target, and compromises the sustainable management of Ontario forests by guaranteeing the logging industry no long-term reduction in wood supply, no increases in the costs of the wood supply, potential exemptions of regulations designed to protect biodiversity in areas where intensive silviculture is to be practiced, and potential extension of forest harvesting north of the Lands for Life area and into First Nations Cree territory (Winfield and Jenish, 1999, pp. 4-21-22). In addition, the government is considering extending forest tenure to the point of virtual ownership, effectively transferring public control of Crown lands to the forest industry. Again, establishing any additional protected areas would be extremely difficult without financial compensation to the forest industry (Ibid.).

1. THE CRISIS IN BOREAL FORESTs

A number of international environmental groups and scientists have recently sounded alarm bells at the state of the world’s forests and the problem of mass species extinction. In its Frontier Forests Initiative, the World Resources Institute (WRI) found that only one fifth of the world’s original forest cover remains in large, relatively natural ecosystems (Bryant, 1997). Almost half the world’s states, 76 countries, have lost all their old growth forests according to the WRI’s pristine forest index, while three countries—Russia, Canada, and Brazil house almost 70% of the world’s large intact pristine forests.

Half of the remaining large tracts of natural forest are found in northern, boreal regions. Canada is home to over a third of the world’s boreal forest and a tenth of total global forest cover (Global Forest Watch, 2000; Nikiforuk, 2000). The Global Forest Watch, a new environmental watchdog, has reported that industrial activities are threatening Canada’s boreal forests. Its new report, entitled Canada’s Forests at a Crossroads: An Assessment in the Year 2000, based on satellite-imaging data and government information, found that much of Canada’s remaining intact forests are being opened to development, predominantly for timber.

In this section, we examine the Ministry of Natural Resource’s current attempt to justify clearcutting forest practices as fire emulation in Ontario’s boreal forests. Further, the Ontario Living Legacy’s inadequate levels of protected areas and lack of buffer zones and wildlife corridors are examined. We make a case for setting conservation biology targets for land protection in order to ensure the long-term viability of ecosystems, species and genetic diversity in the province (anywhere between a third and a half of the land base according to conservation biologists).
CLEARCUTTING AS FIRE EMULATION?

The practice of clearcut logging is the primary method of extracting timber from Ontario’s boreal forest. Presently, the Harris government is developing forest management guidelines which would introduce the concept of clearcuts as mimicking forest fires. The idea of fire emulation is based on the erroneous assumption that clearcut logging resembles fire disturbances in terms of their severity, spatial pattern and frequency. The argument goes as follows: since the boreal forest is susceptible to forest fires and forest fires are major disturbances within the boreal forest, then clearcutting, which is also a major disturbance, is comparable to forest fires in its effects on the ecosystem. This claim is used by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the forest industry to justify clearcutting the boreal forest.

Clearcutting is economically and ecologically destructive. It reduces jobs in the forest sector, while maximizing short-term profits (Greenpeace, 1994, p. 2) Clearcutting is preferred by the logging industry because harvesting can be done quickly and indiscriminately, without any ecological consideration. It is expedient and nothing more.

Clearcutting cuts all the trees on a site, effectively removing original habitat and eliminating nearly all of the forest’s structural complexity. However, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the industry will argue that fire disturbances have the same catastrophic effect on the forest ecosystem as does clearcut logging.

There are a number of reasons why clearcuts cannot emulate forest fires:

- Fires do not leave behind a network of logging roads, which do substantial long term damage by opening up the wilderness to hunters and anglers and other high traffic activities. Even if the Ministry is committed to closing roads after they are no longer needed, past experience has proven that once roads are established local residents continue to keep them open.

- Fires do not consume every tree on a site. Larger and older trees which are fire resistant survive, creating stronger genetic characteristics. Clearcut logging takes the biggest and best trees, leaving the smallest and weakest to regenerate the land.

- Trees consumed by fires remain on the site. Fallen trees decompose into organic matter to rebuild the soil. Standing trees or “snags” provide habitat for a range of animal species. Clearcut logging removes all merchantable trees from a site leaving behind only rejected woody and leafy debris.

- Fires do not generally damage the soil. Clearcuts do. Heavy equipment traffic over the forest floor erodes the top layer of organic material, exposes mineral soils and compacts the soil. Fires generally do not destroy important fungi and other soil bacteria which perform essential functions for plant and tree nourishment. Without the fungi, the soil is nutritionally and functionally impoverished. Clearcuts destroy this fungal network. Erosion follows.

- The effects of wildfires are ecologically sustainable. The effects of clearcutting are not; they do not leave behind a biological legacy. Biological legacies are typically high following a natural disturbance leading to a complete and thorough restructuring of the ecosystem. Clearcuts purposely eliminate the natural structure and compositional legacy in the interest of efficient wood production.
• Forest fires do not produce even-aged tree stands as do clearcuts. Even-aged stands are not a natural phenomenon. No natural disturbance is so severe and large that nature regenerates even-aged tree stands. Virtually all even-aged stands are a result of human activities such as clearcutting and planting.

• Areas that have experienced a forest fire rarely experience another disturbance within fifty years. The Ministry of Natural Resources is considering declaring an old clearcut an existing forest after 20 years and thus open to possible clearcutting again (Ministry of Natural Resources, 1999).

• MNR claims that clearcutting does not destroy habitat, it only changes it to a different type of habitat. It is true that some species need disturbances to survive, however both tree and animal species that can use clearcuts already have all the habitat they need from natural disturbances in forests. Many more species are negatively affected by clearcuts.

The government will post the fire emulation guidelines for public review in the fall of 2000. The question remains: if the public overwhelmingly rejects the claim that our boreal forest should be clearcut based on the idea of fire emulation, will the Ministry of Natural Resources accept scientific and public opinion and go back to the drawing board? The Ministry likes to tout their democratic process but is quick to state that public consultations are not referendums (MNR personal communication with Valastro, 2000).

We do not support the theory of fire emulation as a method of determining harvesting areas and techniques in the boreal forest. We feel this is a way of attempting to justify clearcutting. The boreal forest is susceptible to forest fires and the Ministry has taken this natural phenomenal and equated it to the disturbances created by clearcut logging. Rather, the Ministry should be determining what is ecologically sustainable and set the annual allowable cut according to this figure. In addition, climatic change will have a profound impact on our boreal forest, making it more difficult to control forest fires. It will contribute further to the enormous stress on our forests, accelerating the rate of forest decline.

INADEQUATE LEVELS OF PROTECTION

What levels of boreal forest protection are appropriate? Ontario’s Living Legacy is most often presented by the government as the protection of 12% of the Lands for Life land-base (note that about 7.5% was already protected previously; the OLL decision added 4.5% in parks and protected areas for a total of 12%). Less often does one hear the inverse: that Ontario’s Living Legacy is the signing over of 88% of the area to logging and mining interests.

The 12 percent figure that came as a result of the Living Legacy process has its roots in the global conservation initiatives of the 1980s. In 1982 the third strategy session of the World Congress on National Parks recommended a universal strategy for increasing the quantity and quality of protected areas around the world. The findings of the conservation groups and national governments that were involved in this project were outlined in a document entitled the Bali Action Plan. This document recommended that at least 10% of a nation’s geographical base be set aside for conservation purposes—a figure that represented over double the amount of protected land at that time on a global scale.

The 10% figure was later incorporated into the work of the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, which produced the Bruntland Report entitled Our Common Future. This ambitious report suggested that the total expanse
of protected areas needed to be at least tripled if it was to constitute a representative sample of the Earth’s ecosystem. This tripling, based on the amount of land protected at that time, has been commonly interpreted as a goal of 12%.

It is extremely important to note that the targets of both the Bruntland Commission and the Bali Action Plan were based on a ratio of protected land to total land mass that the authors believed would be politically acceptable at the time for both developing and developed nations. In both cases, the global community wanted to devise a number that they thought was practical on a global basis. In essence, 12% was presented as a minimum achievable standard based not on ecological principles, but on the perceived ability of governments around the globe to buy into the process without deeming it to be unrealistic.

In 1989 the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), along with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), attempted to enshrine this figure into a more Canadian context by introducing their Endangered Spaces campaign. In this campaign the groups called for the protection of 12% of Canada’s lands and waters within a system of parks and protected areas by the end of the century (Killan, p.382). It should also be noted that additional provisions were made within the Endangered Spaces campaign that called for:

- the establishment of buffers around both small Wilderness Parks and the Natural Environment parks in site regions where wilderness targets cannot be met
- strengthening the Provincial Parks Act
- introducing an Ecological Reserves Act

Some of these latter issues will be attended to in the following sections. For the present, it is important to consider this figure in more detail.

The key question raised here: Is 12% a sufficient amount of land to protect?

The Lands for Life process began in 1997 when the Harris government created three land use planning roundtables - Boreal East, Boreal West, and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Lowlands. Each of the roundtables was heavily stacked by the Tories to favour logging, mining and hunting interests. In November 1998, the three roundtables recommended that only 1.6% of land use planning area be protected on top of the 7.5% already protected.

On the eve of an election, the Harris government entered into quiet discussions with the Partnership for Public Lands (the World Wildlife Fund, Wildlands League and Federation of Ontario Naturalists) and announced on March 29, 1999, the Living Legacy settlement. Roughly 2.4 million hectares (4.5 per cent of the planning area on top of the 7.5% that was already protected) would be protected in a total of 378 new provincial parks and protected areas across northern Ontario. The remaining 43.6 million hectares (95 per cent of the planning area) would be the domain of industrial managers. However, when combined with the existing parks, the minimal new protection brought central and northern Ontario officially to the magical international target of having 12% of the land protected.

The fact that the government ignored the initial recommendations and increased the amount of protected area in a period leading up to an election has been viewed with mixed reactions. On one hand, the Living Legacy reflected an unprecedented increase in the amount of protected land in the province. On the other hand, it did so by re-writing some of the fundamental tenets of protection, and transferring managerial responsibility for the vast majority of public land to private managers. Reactions of members of the
environmental community ranged from eager acceptance to widespread criticism. In essence, this increase and the support the government was able to obtain from certain key environmental groups derailed the cohesive and sustained environmental opposition to the process that had plagued the government up until that point. The 12% figure—a figure rooted in politics and not ecology effectively split the opposition and allowed the government to appear to be pro-environment at a critical pre-election period (despite the Harris government’s horrific track record on environmental policy during its first term).

Nevertheless, the question remains as to whether or not 12% is a sufficient amount of land to protect. Certainly, there is no ecological reason to make this claim. Indeed, 12% is far below the minimum amount of protection that many scientists, First Nations and environmental groups were calling for throughout the Lands for Life process. And so, in answering the question of whether 12% is sufficient, one must ask sufficient for what end? By acknowledging the Endangered Spaces campaign and achieving buy-in from certain environmental groups, the 12% figure achieved a high degree of political currency. In so doing, the Living Legacy settlement fostered the deceptive image of a government that was committed to environmental protection and natural heritage issues. On a more scientific level, however, there are a number of pressing concerns.

For example:

- Does the 12% protect representative ecosystems in a way that is sufficient for sustaining their health and well-being in perpetuity?
- Will this 12% figure be sufficient if there is intensive use of up to 88% of the rest of the OLL territory?

The answer in both cases is negative. While it is true that the Living Legacy protects several key ecological hot spots (such as the old-growth forests of the Spanish River and Algoma Highlands ecosystems), the question of whether or not it preserves an adequate amount of representative ecosystems is another matter altogether. A central goal of creating protected areas is to preserve representative elements of the Province’s biodiversity in perpetuity. Certainly, the territory that the government set aside will go part of the way in preserving representative sections of floral life; however, the safety and well-being of faunal life, especially that of the larger mammalian species, is in serious doubt.

In order for a species of any sort to remain healthy, it has to maintain a large enough population size (usually an absolute minimum of 500 adult individuals) to allow for the sustenance of genetic health and avoid excessive inbreeding. To accomplish this, a sufficient portion of contiguous or connected lands has to be set aside to accommodate the territorial habits of the species in question. This is particularly critical for larger ‘umbrella’ species, such as bears and wolves, as well as other large mammalian species such as moose, elk and deer. In this respect, the Ontario Living Legacy decision fails badly. In the language of conservation biology, the OLL has created insufficiently connected islands.

Given that resource extraction will dramatically alter the landscape surrounding the large majority of protected areas in the OLL territory, combined with the fact that the parks and reserves remain largely unbuffered and fragmented, this is far from encouraging for Ontario’s ecological heritage. Add to this the fact that sport hunting will be allowed in all but 13 of the 378 new protected areas (the tiny new Nature Reserve Parks), and the elements of protectionism that the Province heralded with the Living Legacy announcement begin to rapidly dissolve.
To overcome this deficiency in planning, the provincial government must revisit the planning process and determine more scientifically accurate measures for the quality and quantity of protected areas in Ontario. Rather than have the 12% figure as a ceiling for environmental protection, provisions must be made to expand this figure based on gap analysis of species populations. The 12% figure, as Soul and Sanjayan remark, is not biologically defensible, and this deficiency must be corrected. Provisions within the OLL’s Forest Accord must be strengthened considerably to allow for substantial increases in the quality and quantity of protected areas.

**RECOMMENDATION: Set Conservation Biology targets for Land Protection**

Conservation biologists Soul and Sanjayan contend that roughly one-half of a land area “is needed to represent and protect most elements of biodiversity, including wide-ranging animal species” (Science, 1998, v.279, n.2060). Furthermore, with respect to this average, Sanjayan and Soul acknowledge that the proportion might be a little lower in temperate and polar regions, and higher in regions with considerable local endemism and greater habitat heterogeneity (Soul and Sanjayan, 1997, p.10).

**MISSING ELEMENTS OF PROTECTION: WILDLIFE CORRIDORS AND BUFFER ZONES**

Buffers and corridors are two mechanisms that can be used to increase the ecological integrity of protected areas. Buffer zones are areas that run along part or all of the border of a protected area. They are afforded a level of protection less stringent than that of the protected area. They function as a transitional stage between the protected area and the outside world, insulating the protected area from the activities that occur in the surrounding general-use areas.

Wildlife corridors provide large migratory species with continuous habitat. Larger mammalian species can easily migrate outside of park boundaries. Wildlife corridors provide the effect of a much larger contiguous protected area, by connecting two or more parks together. Such passageways are seen as a way of satisfying the territorial impulse of larger mammals while at the same time reducing the problems associated with isolation (inbreeding, unviable populations and species migration into areas with other land-use designations).

In a land-use planning process that has ultimately signed over 88% of its total area to resource extraction industries, both buffers and corridors should be absolutely necessary for any protection strategy. Contrary to this, there is no explicit provision for wildlife corridors or buffers in the Living Legacy document. Indeed, while the document is largely silent on the matter of corridors, it is markedly opposed to buffer zones because, as it states,

> [t]he new protected areas have been delineated on the basis that extensive buffering is not required, because of the ecologically sustainable management that will occur on adjacent lands. (MNR, 1999, p.25).

It is important to note that the term ecologically sustainable is not defined in this case. Generally, the term is used to refer to the long-term health and well-being of an ecosystem as a whole. In the case of the Ontario Living Legacy, the stated rationale behind the absence of buffers appears to be a somewhat dubious concept given other ecologically counter-productive initiatives contained in, or related to, the Living Legacy process, such as intensive logging, mining, sport hunting, and commercial trapping.
It is difficult to avoid viewing the government’s usage of the term without some cynicism. How ecologically sustainable is the management of this general-use area going to be, given the government’s continued support of clearcut logging and other forms of intensive forestry and resource extraction? How sustainable indeed, given the Harris government’s commitment to unprecedented long term (perhaps 99 year) timber leases, and the Forest Accord’s guarantees that there will be no net loss of wood supply?

In the case of buffer zones, the Living Legacy program reflects something of a mixed approach. Despite the explicit claim that no land would be dedicated to acting as a buffer area, there are several examples of planning that reflect a consciousness of the need for buffers. The government, for example, created a land-use designation entitled Enhanced Management Areas (EMAs) which they describe as a new land-use category that has been established in order to provide more detailed direction in areas of special features or values (MNR, 1999, p.25). Among the types of EMAs that the government has established are Recreation, Remote Access, Natural Heritage and Fish and Wildlife. These EMAs are designed to demarcate a conscious orientation to the non-industrial activities that occur within their boundaries. There are 86 EMAs in total (MNR, 1999, p.21).

Likewise, in addition to providing the potential for a buffering function, these EMAs also afford, in combination with parks and reserves, a few scattered examples where protected areas have the (unstudied) potential to fulfill a function akin to that of a wildlife corridor. Once again, however, the problem with these unstated buffers and corridors relates to both the quality and quantity of protection they afford. None of the different EMAs, for example, exclude any form of resource extraction or sport hunting. Indeed, the government restates that EMAs will have no effect on wood supply (MNR, 1999, p.25). Some categories of EMA even support hydro-electric development. And while there is some iteration about the type of road-building allowed in the Fish and Wildlife EMA, the overall conclusion that one draws from this new land-use designation is that while they may look like they could act as buffers and corridors on a map, in reality they mostly do not afford the type of strength necessary to act as buffers and corridors in reality.

The Kawartha Highlands is an example in which a newly created protected area, the Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park (ID P26, Natural Environment) is surrounded by a Conservation Reserve (C24 Sharpe Bay Fen), two Forest Reserves (F28 Mississauga River and F31, Kawartha Highlands) and one enhanced management area (E22r Kawartha Barrens). This would seem to provide a tremendous opportunity for a large, buffered, protected area in southern Ontario. That is, until one realizes that not only is the park itself the site of active mineral stakes, but so are the Forest reserves and EMA. In fact, only the 400+ ha Conservation Reserve is devoid of mineral staking... which is of little consolation given that mineral exploration can be undertaken in conservation reserves if the area is deemed to be significant by the mining industry.

In the case of Lake Nipigon, the government has set aside Whitesand Provincial Park (P2253 - Waterway) as a corridor for caribou travel between Lake Nipigon and Wabakimi Provincial Park to the north. Furthermore, they have bordered this park with the Pikitigushi EMA. Elsewhere around Lake Nipigon the Humboldt-Onaman EMA (EMA 2229) provides a corridor between Lake Nipigon and Onaman Lake. In addition, there are other EMAs and Conservation Reserve delineations that continue this trend in other parts of the Nipigon area. Overall, these designations in the Nipigon area represent an awareness of the importance of corridors and buffer-zones. Once again, however, our concern centres around the fact that existing uses, including forestry, mining and sport hunting will likely compromise the potential for these EMAs and reserves. Indeed, given that the government has also agreed to allow sport hunting to continue in all new provincial...
parks (such as Whitesand), the sad fact remains that there is no truly protected corridor or buffer area in the Nipigon territory to protect migrating herds of caribou that leave Wabakimi.

The government must make amends to correct this oversight immediately. Action must be taken to include specific and substantial provisions for the creation and preservation of high quality buffer zones and wilderness corridors. The authors propose that such corridors and buffer zones become a category of EMA or Park/Reserve unto themselves. Such buffer zones would serve to modify existing protected areas/EMA categories as they now and exist and would do so by excluding sport hunting, mineral exploration and high-impact resource extraction.

2. DEVELOPMENT IN PARKS

High-impact development in Ontario’s provincial parks is a growing concern. The idea that parks are areas which preserve natural environments is in jeopardy as a result of the Harris government’s sharp emphasis on parks as revenue generating devices. Winfield and Jenish (1999), in their Four Year Review of the Common Sense Revolution, note that the Harris government is emphasizing increasing the numbers of visitors to Ontario’s parks seemingly without concern for the effect these increased numbers will have on the natural ecosystem. This is compounded by the Government’s policy of allowing sport hunting and the possibility of mining in all new parks and protected areas in the OLL area.

DEVELOPMENT IN PROTECTED AREAS

Several items in recent years alert us to a potential problem facing protected areas in the Living Legacy. Among these items, the following two may serve as an index of what is yet to come in the new and revised parks and reserves.

- The severe impact of development in compromising the integrity of Canada’s national and provincial parks.
- A trend towards favoring various forms of intensive development in the provinces protected areas south of the Living Legacy territory.

The problem concerns development in Provincial Parks. The view that Parks should be revenue generating devices appears to be a primary concern for Ontario Parks which is not surprising, given how the Harris government has cut the budgets of MNR and Ontario Parks in recent years.

A number of parks in southern Ontario, such as Rondeau, Craiglieth, Bronte Creek and portions of the Niagara Escarpment have recently come under scrutiny for their potential role as sites of development for golf courses (Bronte Creek), housing and cottage development (Niagara Escarpment and Rondeau), and spas (Craiglieth). Similar issues have, in the past, plagued parks and protected areas in what is now the Living Legacy territory (cf. Killan, 1993).

The recent trend in the aforementioned southern parks may spark a renewed interest in bringing development into the parks and reserves contained within the OLL boundaries. In contrast to this, we believe none but the most sensitive forms of development (i.e. small-scale visitor centres, showers and washrooms, etc.) should be allowed in parks or reserves anywhere in Ontario.
MINING

The mining industry was the greatest beneficiary of the Lands for Life process. Not only will the Harris government respect the existing rights of all forms of mining land tenure in the new parks and conservation areas, [but] low impact staking and exploration will be allowed in unclaimed areas for deposits of provincially significant mineral located inside new parks and conservation reserves. (Winfield and Jenish, 1999, p. 4-22). The mining industry would then in effect be able to liquidate the protected status of any new park or protected area if it discovers minerals within its boundaries (MNR, 1999, pp. 20-21). The Harris government has introduced the concept of floating reserve, also known as “rotating parks.” If a mining site is developed in a park, then the area would have its park or conservation status removed and another temporary park would be established to compensate for the loss of protected space. After the ore body is exhausted, the area would purportedly be rehabilitated and the protected status would be reassigned.

According to the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines as many as 50% of the new proposed parks have some sort of land disposition either adjacent or enclosed in the newly proposed areas. (Valastro, 2000a) Under this bureaucratic euphemism of land disposition, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines indicates that as many as 50% of parks or adjacent areas face the threat of some sort of mining-related activity, including prospecting.

The Case of the Kawartha Highlands

The Kawartha Highlands provincial park could be one of the new protected areas opened to mining.

The Lands for Life process expanded The Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park from 1,800 hectares to 33,518 hectares, increasing the size of the park substantially. However, within the park’s boundary there are active mining claims and currently opportunities are being identified for controlled mineral exploration within the new protected area (MNR, 2000).

If minerals are discovered, this could mean areas of Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park may be removed due to mining development within the park boundary. In theory another comparable area would be selected to replace the protected area lost to mining. The temporary park may or may not be adjacent to the Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park (Valastro, 2000b)

This arrangement raises many questions regarding protection of our natural heritage. What is the function of a protected area? What is the rationale for establishing protected areas if their status can be relinquished overnight? If a temporary park is comparable to the original area identified for protection then why wasn’t it protected initially?

Furthermore, the Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park does not permit forestry and hydroelectric development, however if mining is allowed in the park then the mining industry will likely require hydro-electric power development or power poles into the park, possible tailings and mill effluent disposal sites, a camp, and a network of roads.

The idea of “floating reserves” will likely be presented to the public by emphasizing that mineral exploration will be tightly controlled and environmentally sensitive and that subsequent mining operations will only occupy a “tiny fraction of the land” or “will only scratch the surface.” However, mining is far from the benign activity that industry executives and marketing programs claim it to be. Reports detailing the environmental impact of mining in Ontario (c.f. Winfield and Jenish), as well as a number of well-publicized in-
cidents and around the world involving mineral extraction projects and their impact on ecosystem functioning, point to a much more troubling future for parks, protected areas and neighbouring lands where mining and mineral exploration takes place.

**RECOMMENDATION: Ban mining and other high impact activities in all parks and protected areas**

In 1988, the Ontario Liberal Government banned mineral exploration in all provincial parks. The Tories’ proposed changes allowing mining within protected areas that have high mineral potential (yet to be defined) would mean that the newly protected areas are not even protected. By allowing mining in parks and protected areas, these new Harris parks simply do not meet the international definition of protected areas (CELA, 1999). The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria for the definition of protected areas specifically require the permanent exclusion of mining, logging and hydroelectric development (Winfield and Jenish, 1999, pp. 4-22 and 4-23). Real protection of Ontario’s parks and conservation areas requires that the ban on mining and other high impact activities be re-instated immediately in parks and surrounding buffer zones and wildlife corridors.

3. SPORT HUNTING

Bud Wildman, former NDP Minister of Natural Resources, has aptly noted, at a July 1999 workshop at the University of Toronto on sport hunting, that:

> there are only two special interest groups Premier Mike Harris listens to—the Canadian Federation of Taxpayers and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH).

Although hunters comprise less than 4% of the population in Ontario, they have an inordinate influence with the Tory government through their powerful OFAH lobby. Winfield and Jenish write that the Harris government’s approach to wildlife and wilderness issues seems exclusively concerned with the interests of sport hunters and fishers. The concerns of other stakeholders have been excluded (1996, p. 46; 1999, p. 4-11).

This is evident in the Harris Government’s decision to open virtually all new parks and protected areas created under the OLL decision to sport hunting. To make matters worse, the revised OLL decision in July 1999 raises the possibility of expanding sport hunting in existing Wilderness Parks. Moreover, while the budget of the government agency Ontario Parks has been severely cut, sport hunting groups have been given tens of millions of dollars in public money to promote sport hunting opportunities (covered in detail in section 4 of the report). Not only is this special interest group being subsidized, it is being given new powers as Ontario’s laws, policies and institutions related to wildlife are undergoing complete restructuring (Winfield and Jenish, 1999, p. 4-11). Finally, the Tories promised in their 1999 election platform to introduce a Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act which would enshrine the right to sport hunt.
SPORT HUNTING IN PARKS

Why should sport hunting be allowed in any park or protected area? Sport hunting is already allowed on the vast majority of Crown (publicly-owned) land, most of which is not protected in parks. In addition, although Ontario’s Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act states that “A person shall not hunt, trap or possess wildlife in a provincial park,” there are some exceptions (determined on a case-by-case basis). Currently, 67 out of 270 existing provincial parks allow various forms of sport hunting—such as birds and mammals in parts of Algonquin, moose in Lake Superior, and ducks and geese in Presqule and Long Point. The number of parks open to sport hunting increases substantially when the new parks created under the Ontario Living Legacy initiative are considered.

Of the 378 new parks, park additions, and protected areas created under the March 1999 decision, only 13 are Nature Reserves (the smallest protected areas), and none are Wilderness Parks, the two categories of parks in Ontario which currently prohibit sport hunting and motorized access. Put differently, sport hunting will be allowed everywhere in the Lands for Life area including all new parks, except for 13 tiny Nature Reserves. That leaves a mere 48,711 hectares (ha) out of 42 million ha in the Living Legacy area for animals to live free from the threat of bullets, an infinitesimal amount of real protection. It is also (referring back to an earlier section) why the whole idea of buffer zones and wildlife corridors are also compromised.

Existing provisions for hunt quotas are outlined in the Ministry of Natural Resources Wildlife Management Units (WMUs), which overlay the province as a whole. In essence, the WMUs carve the province into a complex grid of tag requirements and hunting allowances with each WMU having its own provisions about what can and cannot be hunted, what hunting apparatus (rifles, shotguns, bows) can be used, when the hunt season starts and finishes, etc. The Living Legacy document makes no provision on how to integrate the WMUs with the new land-use designations. Indeed, with respect to hunting, the Living Legacy states that it will follow a policy of attempting to preserve the existing uses present in Living Legacy territory.

THE THREAT TO WILDERNESS PARKS

In the July 1999 Ontario Living Legacy document, the Harris government, to the surprise of many, raised the possibility of opening existing Wilderness Parks to sport hunting and fishing. After having already opened all newly established parks to sport hunting, the government’s recent move to weaken wilderness parks which had been established over the last couple of decades, and which have excluded the “hook and bullet” crowd since 1989 makes one wonder: can it possibly get any worse for Ontario’s wildlife and our natural heritage? If the status of existing Wilderness Parks is altered, then virtually the whole province is open to sport hunting.

In Ontario, there are two categories of parks which are currently off-limits to sport hunting and motorized access: Nature Reserves and Wilderness Parks. Wilderness Parks are the most ecologically significant protected areas in Ontario—large in size and predominantly roadless sanctuaries, they are the only areas in where natural ecosystem function can hope to survive into the future. According to Ontario Parks:
Wilderness Parks are vast areas of land and water (generally a minimum of 50,000 hectares or 500 sq. km) where nature functions freely. Visitors to Ontario’s eight existing Wilderness Parks may choose to canoe, hike or camp in undisturbed settings. They are provided with solitude, challenge and personal interaction with nature. All Wilderness Parks are managed to ensure that their natural values remain for future generations.

Thus, the government’s plan to open Wilderness Parks to hunting is in direct contradiction to the objectives for these areas as stated by Ontario Parks.

Ontario’s eight Wilderness Parks are: Killarney, Lady Evelyn-Smoothwater, Quetico, Wabakimi, Woodland Caribou, Kesagami, Opasquia, and Polar Bear. Killarney Wilderness Park (on the north shore of Georgian Bay) is due for a new Park Management Plan, and is likely to be opened for wildlife killing soon. In Ontario’s Northwest, three Wilderness Parks are threatened. Two of these, Wabakimi and Woodland Caribou Wilderness Parks, do not yet have management plans, and could begin the management planning process within the next several months. Quetico’s last park management planning process was completed in 1995, and is unlikely to undergo the costly process in the near term. It is essential for the public to become involved in the public consultations surrounding the Park Management Planning process.

**ROAD BUILDING**

One of the concerns related to hunting in parks and protected areas relates to the infrastructure that underlies this activity, particularly roads. The Province’s larger protected areas, classified as Wilderness Parks (IUCN classification #2), present a challenge in this capacity because there is little if any surface level transportation infrastructure. Since Wilderness Parks represent the largest tracts of protected area in the Province (averaging 500 sq. km), and since the Wilderness designation prevents activities such as hunting and road-building, how will these conflicting factors be resolved? In addition, barring the obvious ecological impacts that come with rifle, shotgun and compound bow hunting, the concern about infrastructure issues such as road-building relate to the following:

Wilderness Parks would be unable to maintain their current IUCN status with the construction of roads; The construction of roads allows for increased access to wilderness areas. Increased access poses qualitative and quantitative problems for these areas: greater numbers of people can access the parks, and, they can do so in a manner that is ecologically invasive. Motorized vehicles also pose problems relating to noise and emissions. Certain species, such as elk and deer, are deeply affected by road-building, the former because they become skittish and their migratory patterns are affected, the latter because they are attracted to clearings (of which roads are one sort) and thus present even easier prey for hunters. Roads in essence will carve a previously roadless area, resulting not in one big protected area with roads, but a series of smaller protected areas bounded by roads.

While it is true that provisions for remote access enhanced management areas (EMAs) (OLL, p.25) mitigate the effect of road-building on certain areas of the Legacy territory, there is no guarantee that this is a long-term solution especially given the tenuous nature of EMAs that was discussed in an earlier section.
Indeed, the past actions of the MNR with road-building activities in sensitive areas does not fill one with much confidence. In 1998, for example, the Ministry of the Environment sued the MNR over an illegal road construction project in the sensitive Temagami area because the MNR had violated their own environmental road-building practices. The MNR lost this court case but proceeded to retroactively revise their practices and approve the road.

We urge the government to place a moratorium on any and all road building in wilderness areas. Furthermore, the authors advocate the elimination of any non-road related sport hunting initiatives in Wilderness Parks, such as might be achieved through fly-in hunt parties.

THE LOOMING HERITAGE HUNTING AND FISHING ACT—AMERICA’S WISE USE MOVEMENT AGENDA COMES NORTH

The industrial and extractive recreation agenda of America’s ‘Wise Use Movement’, and its accompanying anti-environmentalist ideology, are gaining ground in Canada as sport hunters are mounting aggressive campaigns to gain access to protected areas. Their recent triumphs are related to the emergence of neo-conservative governments in provinces like Alberta and Ontario, and represent the latest steps in their widespread assault on environmental protection.

In its 1999 election platform, the Harris government promised to enshrine sport hunting as a ‘right’ through a Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act. The Harris Tories, in their election platform, the Blueprint, state:

**The Right to Hunt and Fish.**

Hunting and fishing are traditional outdoor activities in many parts of Ontario. The license fees paid by outdoors enthusiasts help make it possible for us to preserve wildlife and their habitat. We support the proud and established Ontario tradition of ethical and safe hunting and fishing.

It’s time to legally recognize heritage hunting and fishing practices in Ontario and acknowledge the role anglers and hunters have played in environmental conservation.

We’ll legislate the right to hunt and fish in Ontario with a Heritage Hunting & Fishing Act.

The model for the proposed Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act is probably Minnesota, where the anti-environmental Wise Use Movement has gained a lot of ground. On the OFAH web site, there’s a question reading “Minnesota has enshrined in law, fishing and hunting as a ‘valued part of our heritage that shall be forever preserved for the people and shall be managed by law and regulation for the public good’. Will your party commit to angling and hunting legislation similar to the Minnesota statement?”
THE NEW WILDLIFE ADVISORY BOARD: TRANSFERRING MONEY AND POWER TO SPORT HUNTERS

The infamous Omnibus Bill (Bill 26, The Savings and Restructuring Act, 1996) amended the Game and Fish Act to permit the establishment of a separate account to hold money from fees collected for hunting and fishing licenses issued under the Act. The amendments also provided for the establishment of an advisory board to the Minister to oversee the account and report on it annually to the Lieutenant-Governor in Council and the Legislature (Winfield and Jenish, 1999, p. 4-12 to 4-13). Winfield and Jenish note that:

Serious concerns were expressed that the Fund would be used exclusively for the purpose of managing game species, and that individuals and organizations concerned with non-game species would be excluded from the Advisory Committee. There were also concerns that the creation of a dedicated fund would facilitate the privatization of fish and game management in the province (ibid.).

These concerns seem to have become reality. In July 1996, the Ministry of Natural Resources appointed members to The Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board (see Table 2). Representatives of sport hunting and fishing clearly dominate the Board.

The Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board

- Phil Morlock, Whitney (Canadian National Sport Fishing Foundation)
- Charles Alexander, Dryden (Ont. Federation of Anglers and Hunters)
- Gary Ball, Peterborough (Hunting Heritage/Hunter Futures Board)
- Walt Crawford, Elora (Trout Unlimited Canada)
- Sandy Dickson, Atikokan (Canoe Canada Outfitters)
- Brian Dykstra, Marten River (Beaverland Camp)
- Sandi Jonhson, London (Ont. Federation of Anglers and Hunters)
- Pat Kennedy, Haliburton (Haliburton Highlands Outdoors Assoc.)
- Jack Newton, Huntsville (Ontario Hunt Clubs Association)
- George Purvis, Gore Bay (commercial fishing operator)
- Duncan Sinclair, Aylmer (Ducks Unlimited)

Further, in April 1997, the Ministry of Natural Resources signed a perpetual agreement between the province and Ducks Unlimited (a hunting and conservation group). The Harris government offered ...99 year agreements to Ducks Unlimited for Crown lands on which wetland habitat restoration projects will be located, invites Ducks Unlimited to participate in resource planning initiatives for Crown and private lands that may affect wetlands conservation projects, and gives the private organization roles and responsibilities in areas of communications, environmental reviews, science transfer, information management and administration (ibid.). This raises serious questions. Should special interest groups, with ulterior motives (i.e., shooting and killing ducks) be given special authority over wetlands and their management? As Winfield and Jenish note (1999, p. 4-14), the agreement appeared to give a private organization, whose mandate is to promote sporting interests of its members, a privileged place in the Ministry’s policy development and planning processes, and in the disposition of Crown lands (ibid.).
In February 1999, the Ministry announced that it would pay the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters between $300,000 and $350,000 over the next five years to administer hunting training and licensing programs.

**RECOMMENDATION: Ban Sport Hunting In All Parks And Protected Areas**

Public attitudes about animals and their place in the world are changing. One sign of this is a recent Oracle poll (October 15, 1999), which found that an overwhelming majority of the Ontario public (77%) oppose sport hunting in all parks and protected areas. The Harris government needs to take a U-turn. Rather than riding roughshod over public sentiment and the objectives of parks in favour of a small but privileged minority of hunters, it is time to listen to the public for a change.

Sport hunting should be banned not only in wilderness parks (as the Liberal Government moved in its landmark decision in 1989), but in all Ontario parks and protected areas including conservation reserves, and natural environment and waterway parks as an initial step. As noted earlier, buffers zones and wildlife corridors also require enhanced protection. We have already appropriated and degraded an excessive amount of habitat, and it is high time to give the other beings with whom we share this province some expanded areas of peaceful sanctuary.

**RECOMMENDATION: Promote Nonconsumptive Uses Of Ontario’s Wildlife**

At the same time, there is an urgent need to challenge the notion of wildlife as ‘game’ to be managed for recreational killing, and to replace it with an holistic, ecological approach to Ontario’s wildlife and wild spaces. There are a multitude of ecological, ethical and economic reasons to do so. Funding issues will be discussed in Section 4 of the report.

Sport hunting results in artificial species selection, as trophy hunters tend to select out the best genotypes within a population. The largest, healthiest animals which would survive to breed in a healthy ecosystem are destroyed. Ecosystem damage also occurs as a result of predator elimination, feeding programs that increase target animals, habitat alteration to increase target animals, the breeding and introduction of new species for sport hunting, and access roads for hunting. We must also recognize that animals are emotional beings with highly developed social lives, and that sport hunting causes stress and sadness through such things as the break-up of family units and the orphaning of young animals.

There are also ethical concerns posed by the new Harris agenda. While sport hunters commonly argue that children learn healthy, noble, and respectful ideas about their place in the world through hunting, the reality is that recreational killing is merely entrenching a dominionistic view of nature and humans place in it, and translates into many forms of dysfunctional and sometimes violent behaviour. A recent study by the Humane Society of the United States found that 3 out of 10 people who abuse animals also physically abuse people (also see the excellent analysis by the Canada Federation of Humane Societies).

At the same time, sport hunters comprise an extremely small percentage of the human population—about 3.5% in Ontario in 1996, and declining according to an Environment Canada survey (DuWors et al., 1999). On the other hand, non-consumptive nature enthusiasts represent the fastest growing sector of nature users (nearly 1 in 5 Canadians cited wildlife viewing as a recreational activity). Canoeists, hikers and other eco-tourists are the fastest growing segment of nature users in Canada and other places in the world. Unlike sport hunter and anglers, this segment has minimal impact on wildlife and individuals do not generally support recreational killing. However, the ‘voice’ of this large and rapidly...
growing segment of society is rarely heard compared to the organized lobbying by
groups such as the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), who have clearly
obtained the ear of the Harris government.

4. AN UNDEMOCRATIC PROCESS
DESTROYING GOVERNMENT’S INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

After a destructive first four-year term which saw the budgets of the Ministries of Envi-
ronment and Natural Resources each cut by roughly 40%, Ontario Premier Mike Harris
is planning in his second term (which started in June 1999) to give preferred special
interest groups fuller control over public land and wildlife. The implementation of the
Ontario Living Legacy could give the forest and mining industries practical ownership of
Crown Lands via long term tenure agreements, and groups such as the Ontario Federation
of Anglers and Hunters fuller control of ‘wildlife management’. The Harris govern-
ment is setting up a private governance system for Ontario’s public resources whereby
the public will be asked to appeal to special interests groups, like logging companies
and OFAH, rather than the government to address its environmental concerns.

(i) Cuts to the Ministry of Environment

With the election of the Conservative government in June 1995 the Ministry of Environ-
ment (and Energy) was targeted with some of the government’s deepest cuts. It lost
about a third of its staff and budget in two years. Over 750 positions were eliminated:
350 staff were laid off in May 1996 and 303 in January 1997. The 1990 staff levels, consist-
ing of 2,450 people, fell 40% by 1997, by which time the Ministry staff was at an esti-
mated 1,470. These series of sharp cuts to the Ontario Ministry of Environment’s budget
and staff in the 1990s have left it with fewer resources at the turn of the century than it
controlled in the mid-1970s, shortly after the ministry was first created (Krajnc, 2000).

(ii) Cuts to the Ministry of Natural Resources

The Harris government also introduced major cuts to the budgets of the Ministry of
Natural Resources. In 1996, the Ministry announced layoffs of 2,170 people over the next
two years. Funding for overall forest management activities was reduced by $45.9 mil-
lion by the 1997/98 fiscal year (Winfield and Jenish, 1999, p. 4-2). As a result, the Ministry
lost half its staff in the Forest Management Branch. Winfield and Jenish further note that
while the Ministry’s compliance, monitoring, science and policy functions suffered cuts
in personnel of between 27% and 68%, there were no cuts in personnel dedicated to
industry services (ibid.).

At the same time as reducing government budgets for forest and wildlife protection,
the government offered generous new subsidies to the forest, mining and sport hunting
industries in essence taking out money allotted for the public good and handing it over
to its preferred special interest groups. Following the Ontario Living Legacy decision in
March 1999, the Government offered the forest industry $21 million in new subsidies
and compensation, and the mining industry more than $20 million in new subsidies.
More recently, Premier Harris announced at the opening of the Outdoors Show in To-
ronto in March of this year the allocation of $15.5 million over a four-year period to sport
hunters and fishers, including government assistance in building viewing platforms and
marketing new hunting and fishing opportunities (Canadian Press, 2000).
(iii) Cuts to Ontario Parks

Ontario’s park system faced major cuts to its operation and capital budget in the fall of 1995, shortly after the Harris government was first elected, and again in the government’s April 1996 budget. In the 1997/98 fiscal year, the operating budget for the provincial parks system was reduced by $9.1 million per year (Winfield and Jenish, 1996, p. 52). In May 1996, the government created a new organization within the MNR named Ontario Parks, whose goal it was to increase revenue from 45% to 70% in five years (that is from $15 million to $20 million).

On November 18, 1999, the Harris government announced a further $2.3 million cut to the Ontario Parks and Forest Management programs. It claimed administrative efficiencies could be achieved through, among other things, changing the operating status of up to six underused parks. (Management Board Secretariat, 1999, p. 4) Ironically, as noted above, Premier Harris found $15.5 million in new money for sport hunters and fishers.

PRIVATEZING WILDERNESS AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

The sport hunting agenda is dominating the Harris government’s approach to the province’s wildlife. The government has already signed 99 year wetlands management agreements with Ducks Unlimited and transferred hunter education and licensing programs to the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. In February 2000, Ontario’s Minister of Natural Resources announced that the training and licensing of new hunters will be turned over to the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. According to John Snobelen, the province will pay the federation up to $350,000 over five years to run the program.

Further announcements on privatizing wildlife management are expected at the Premier’s Symposium on North America’s Hunting Heritage in Ottawa on August 23-27, 2000, hosted by the Harris government (see the government web site: http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/mnr/ps2000).

DECLINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It is important to note, as did former Environment Commissioner Eva Ligeti, that the previous land use planning process for the region took more than 10 years (Winfield and Jenish, 1999, p. 4-9). In contrast, the Lands for Life process was completed in two years. The Harris government used an unfair, unrepresentative blitzkrieg approach in the Lands for Life process which ensured that the process would be hijacked by industrial interests. The secrecy and lack of consultation inherent in this agreement left little room for public involvement, debate and discussion in complete contradiction to the promises made by the government at the outset that the process would herald a new era of public involvement in land use planning.

The Lands for Life process began in 1997 when the Harris government created three land use planning roundtables. Each of the roundtables was heavily stacked by the Tories to favour logging, mining and hunting interests. The proposal was released in November 1998, and the public was given a 30-day comment period to review the 250 recommendations in the consolidated roundtable report. This initial proposal was overwhelmingly pro-industry. Then in early 1999 the Harris government entered into quiet negotiations with resource industry representatives and the Partnership for Public Lands. When the result of these negotiations, the Living Legacy deal and the Forest Accord were announced
on March 29, the public was again given only 30 days to comment. At the same time, the government announced a separate deal with the mining industry, having excluded the public from the process as usual.

THE ABSENCE OF A FIRST NATIONS VOICE

One of the most substantial socio-cultural effects of the Living Legacy program relates to the First Nations communities that live within the boundaries of the planning area. A major concern that the authors of this report have relates to the representation of First Nations people, both in the Lands for Life process and the resulting Living Legacy document. The final document grossly misrepresents and minimizes the concerns of First Nations peoples. For example, section 1.4 of the Living Legacy claims that

Consultation with Aboriginal peoples was an important part of the work of the Lands for Life Round Tables. (MNR, 1999, p.4)

Given that the First Nations representatives on Lands for Life Round Tables resigned their positions early in the process, this is misleading to say the least. It is also somewhat troubling, given that the reason they withdrew appears to be over their substantial frustration with the direction taken by the Lands for Life proceedings. Further, land north of 50 was included in the Forest Accord negotiations between the government, the Partnership for Public Lands, and the resource industries, even though it was not part of Lands for Life. This represents an intent to move industrial forestry north and build public roads north of 50. The Anishnawbe Nation was not part of the process, yet its land was bargained away.

The Living Legacy goes on to acknowledge that there will be attempts made to discuss and consult with First Nations and Metis peoples on matters relating to the long-term preservation of sacred areas, economic opportunities for aboriginal communities, and traditional land uses in the boundary area. However, it is of concern that there is nothing more substantial than this. Indeed, there is no guarantee, given the government’s prior misleading use of the term consultation, that there will be any serious negotiation on First Nations issues in the Living Legacy area.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Restore Funding to MOE, MNR and Ontario Parks; Re-establish Public Control of Our Natural Heritage; and Re-assert Full Public Participation, including First Nations
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