

2022-11-06

Comments to Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks

Comments on the proposal Amendment to Ontario Regulation 316/07 under the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006 to create Alfred Bog Provincial Park (ERO 019-4868)

Background

The mission of the Ottawa Valley Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS-OV) is to protect and preserve biodiversity in the Ottawa Valley by promoting and advocating for ecological integrity in the management of public lands, working with other local and regional environmental groups, and collaborating with Indigenous Communities, industries and governments.

The Albert Bog Provincial Park proposal is of significant interest to us because this wetland boasts high ecological value, is rich in biodiversity, serves as a carbon sink and is under severe threat. Habitat fragmentation, incompatible land use and draining are degrading its ecological integrity. The Bog is also located on unceded Indigenous lands.

Need to acknowledge and respect Indigenous Rights

CPAWS-OV firmly believes that the creation of this proposed provincial park will need the free, prior and informed consent of local Indigenous communities. They must be appropriately concerted and their rights recognized. As such, the following recommendations should be revised and approved by them.

Need to prohibit the use of ATVs in the park

Removing all-terrain vehicles from Alfred Bog would be beneficial. Among other issues, ATV tracks tend to drain and collect water, replacing natural shallow water habitats on a micro-scale. These ruts will then attract species needing those areas where they are likely to collide with ATVs. The sensitive turtle population of the region is particularly at risk of mortality by collision with motorized vehicles circulating in the wetland.

Need to prevent further draining of the Bog and restore its hydrology

Albert Bog has shrunk significantly because of drainage and peat stripping. Water has been pouring out of openings in the peat bank, leaving the land noticeably dryer near the edges. As such, the successional growth of non-bog woody plants has accelerated, and the soils in these

new brushy forests are not functional peatland. Consequently, they are likely to release more carbon than they will sequester.

CPAWS-OV suggests the MECP completes and quickly implements a science-based management plan to protect and restore the ecological integrity of the Bog. This plan must highlight an active management strategy to restore the peatland of the area. It should include provisions on regulating activities allowed, acquiring properties in and around the Bog to limit fragmentation and create buffer zones, and collaborating with others to create an ecological corridor between Alfred Bog to Mer Bleue.

For more information, please contact:

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