

**WAKAMI LAKE
PROVINCIAL PARK**

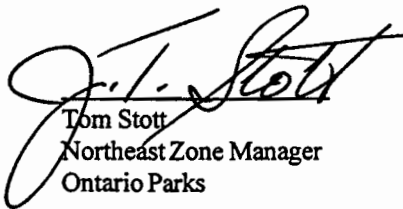
**INTERIM
MANAGEMENT
STATEMENT**

APPROVAL STATEMENT

This Interim Management Statement will provide interim direction for the management of **Wakami Lake Provincial Park** until a comprehensive Park Management Plan is prepared.

This statement will provide the basis for the subsequent preparation of the Park Management Plan.

I am pleased to approve this Interim Management Statement for **Wakami Lake Provincial Park**.


Tom Stott
Northeast Zone Manager
Ontario Parks

99-03-16
Date

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

NAME:	Wakami Lake
CLASS:	Recreation*
Site Region/Site District:	4E 3
M.N.R. REGION:	Northeast/Chapleau
Total Area (ha):	LAND: 7081 WATER: 1788
Regulation Date:	1969

TARGETS

EARTH SCIENCE REPRESENTATION

geological theme	feature
Abitibi Upland (Subprovince) Postglacial Lake Sultan	Height of Land; Dune Field; Till Deposition; Lacustrine Beach Ridges

LIFE SCIENCE REPRESENTATION

site type/landscape unit	species/communities
Southern boundary of the Boreal Forest Region- elements of Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Region	Jack Pine, Spruce, Yellow and White Birch, Mountain Maple, Sugar Maple, Red and White Pine, Cherry.

CULTURAL RESOURCE REPRESENTATION

theme	theme segment
Forest Industry and Forest Industry Communities	Logging in the early 20th century; Boreal Forest Ecology

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

day use	car camping	wilderness/interior
9 188	14 820	1 624

INVENTORIES

level/type	reconnaissance/ completion date	detailed completion date	required?
earth science		1981	
life science		1981	
cultural		1983	
recreational			Yes
other			

* While currently a recreation class park, Wakami Lake is managed as a natural environment park in recognition of its significant cultural, earth science and life science features, and its capacity to support a wide range of outdoor recreational activities. The classification will be officially reviewed during the park management planning process and public consultation. Policies will reflect the natural environment classification.

MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

1.0 LAND TENURE

There are no alienated lands within the park.

2.0 LAND ACQUISITION/DISPOSAL

The Wakami Dunes, a 1,120 hectare area, will be added to the park under the Ministry's Keep It Wild program. The process involves full public review and regulation of the property under the Provincial Parks Act. These dunes are a rare example of parabolic (wind blown, U-shaped ridges) dunes, rarely seen in this part of the province. Some areas of the site support old growth and mature white pine which is uncommon on this type of landform.

2.1 Guidelines

2.1.1 The new addition will be managed as a nature reserve zone in accordance with the Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies (1992).

3.0 EXISTING/PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Wakami Lake Provincial Park currently has four campgrounds with 65 campsites in total and 20 interior campsites. Other development includes three self-guided walking trails, plus the 75 kilometre Height of Land Hiking Trail and the Logging Exhibit, 16 privies, several docks, a staff house, various maintenance buildings and a dry dump/storage area and gatehouse. Guidelines regarding the erosion and deposition problem in the day-use area are discussed in section 7.2.

3.1 Guidelines

3.1.1 No future development will take place until an approved park management plan is in place unless a public health or safety problem exists. In that case, appropriate planning procedures will be followed to ensure environmental concerns are addressed.

3.1.2 A full safety inspection, as well as a cost benefit analysis (renovation versus rebuilding) by a qualified engineer of the Natural Heritage Education building is required.

3.1.3 Existing interior campsites, portages, and hiking trails will be managed according to provincial park standards, as funding permits.

4.0 RECREATION ACTIVITIES

The park offers two different camping experiences to visitors: campground and interior. Those staying in the campground or day-use areas enjoy fishing, boating, swimming, self-guided walks, and park interpretive programs. More adventurous recreationists explore the park's interior by using the Height of Land Hiking Trail or the canoe route which is partially within the park. Sport fishing is Wakami's most popular recreational activity.

4.1 Guidelines

- 4.1.1** A review of recreational activities and facilities in the park will be carried out as part of the management planning process to determine the needs of visitors, levels of use and the potential addition or reduction of activities and facilities.

5.0 COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

5.1 Trapping

There are no registered traplines in Wakami Lake Provincial Park. However, an abandoned trap cabin does exist in the interior of the park. The cabin's status will be reviewed and determined during park management planning and visitor services planning.

5.2 Timber Management

The timber adjacent to the northeast boundary is eligible for harvesting. Access is via the Wakami Dam Road, which cuts south from Hwy #667 and intersects the park boundary three kilometres north of the park dam. The Symington Road is a forest access road extending from the Wakami dam within the park, east through the park and into Superior Forest. Although this road was planned under the timber management planning process, it is a non-conforming use within this provincial park. The road will remain closed to all vehicular use until a comprehensive review is completed within the context of Provincial Park policies. If the review determines that the road could be accommodated within that policy framework, it will be permitted only following the completion of a park management plan. If the road cannot be accommodated, it will be permanently closed and a rehabilitation strategy will be implemented.

5.2.1 Guidelines

- 5.2.1.1** No commercial logging activities are permitted within park boundaries.

- 5.2.1.2** Prescriptions for access, harvest, renewal and maintenance activities adjacent to the park will be developed during the timber management planning process for the Superior Forest, which includes full public consultation and a multi-disciplinary planning team. In general, prescriptions will recognize parks and park-related values that may be impacted by timber management activities. Examples of values are: water quality, fish and wildlife populations and habitats, vegetation species and communities, cultural features, canoe routes, and aesthetic qualities:

Timber management activities can impact these values through unplanned access, erosion, siltation, noise, loss of habitat or significant features, and eliminating natural areas that provide linkages to other natural areas. Specific prescriptions to protect parks and park-related values will vary depending on terrain, tree species, timing of park use compared to timing of the timber management activity, noise, aesthetics, viewscape and access.

Areas of Concern will be designated adjacent to the park. Within these, timber management operations will be conducted using a range of treatment options (i.e. reserves, modified harvesting). Daily/seasonal timing of operations, spray buffers, road planning, requirements on work permits, and existing MNR guidelines (i.e. Fisheries and Water Quality, Moose Habitat, Stream Crossings) will also be used to protect known park values.

5.2.1.3 All new primary and secondary roads constructed for harvesting operations will be kept at least 180 metres from park boundaries. Exceptions will be reviewed in detail on a case by case basis.

5.3 Mining

5.3.1 Guidelines

5.3.1.1 No mining of aggregate material will be permitted within the park.

6.0 NATIVE INTERESTS

Two known native graveyard sites are located within the park. One is located within the day-use area and the other is located within an undeveloped area of the park. The park lies within the James Bay Treaty #9 and the Robinson-Huron Treaty #61 area. Status Indians enjoying treaty rights may continue subsistence activities.

6.1 Guidelines

6.1.1 All native graveyards located within the park will be protected and maintained in accordance with the Provincial Cemeteries Act and in consultation with the appropriate First Nation.

7.0 NATURAL RESOURCES

7.1 Water

Water levels of Wakami Lake are controlled by a dam operated by the Ministry of Natural Resources in co-operation with Ontario Hydro at the northeastern tip of Wakami Lake. The present concrete dam was built in 1969 and is used to control water for recreational and fishery purposes. As well, an agreement with Ontario Hydro was reached in the early 1980s to ensure a water flow adequate to drive a turbine for power generation purposes in the town of Sultan.

7.1.1 Guidelines

7.1.1.1 Water levels will be maintained at \pm 99.6 inches in summer and 97.0 inches in winter (above reference bench mark). In the case of an emergency (eg. human life or property is threatened), the Superintendent, with the approval of a Regional Engineer and Life Science Biologist may temporarily alter the water level. Otherwise, water levels may not go below traditional levels without an Environmental Impact Assessment.

7.1.1.2 Motor boats will not be permitted on Lake #10 (Imakaw Lake).

7.1.1.3 Motors on Efbay Lake will continue to be restricted to under 10 horsepower.

7.2 Landforms

The most significant landforms in Wakami Lake Provincial Park are the many dunes and eskers. The Efby Lake Esker forms a natural boundary, where it braids around Imakaw Lake between Efby and Wakami Lakes. This esker forms the Height of Land between the Atlantic and Arctic Watersheds. All lakes west of Efby Lake Esker flow south, while all lakes east of the esker, including Wakami Lake, flow north. Other landforms include lacustrine ridges, most evident near the day use area; a marsh wetland area located adjacent to the day use beach area; and numerous glacial erratics found within the development area.

In past years, shoreline erosion along campsites and the day-use area has increased dramatically. To stem the erosion, log cribs were constructed, filled with boulders, and then backfilled with earth. A gabion breakwall was also installed in 1992 to control erosion. Unfortunately, this only transferred the erosion to the beach area which is being depleted as sand is transported into the adjacent wetland. To compensate for the loss of sand, past practice was to replenish the beach with truckloads of sand, resulting in the premature filling of the wetland. Birch Hill Campground has experienced extensive erosion where the road parallels the lakeshore. Here, erosion has exposed a series of old wooden cribs creating a safety hazard for the road and possible loss of campsites due to erosion.

7.2.1 Guidelines

- 7.2.1.1** The dune and esker complexes within the park will be managed as nature reserves until a management plan is approved. These landforms should be identified and delineated on a map.
- 7.2.1.2** The Height of Land will be protected to preserve the established drainage basin and to serve as an interpretive feature of importance to the physiography of this region.
- 7.2.1.3** Benchmarks will be established at the beach area and the marsh area adjacent to the beach, and will be monitored for erosion and sand deposition.
- 7.2.1.4** Shoreline erosion will be identified as a major issue in the Wakami Lake Provincial Park Management Plan.
- 7.2.1.5** An erosion control study, including alternatives for remedial action, will be carried out in the Birch Hill Campground and adjacent areas where the shoreline is impacted by erosion.
- 7.2.1.6** The long term effects of erosion and sedimentation in the coastal zone will be fully evaluated prior to any solutions being developed in the park management plan. No sand will be permitted to be dumped onto the day-use area in the interim.

7.3 Vegetation

Wakami Lake Provincial Park is located within the Boreal Forest Region but supports species typically associated with the southern Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Forest Region. These species exist as relics, separated from their continuous range, and are biological islands of the southern species. Ten broad vegetation types have been identified in the Reconnaissance Life Science Inventory of Wakami Lake Provincial Park (1981) with a Yellow Birch/Sugar Maple forest on the east side of the park being the most significant. These trees are at the northern limit of their range. Two other vegetation types are also considered significant. The sand plain Jack Pine forests in the northern third of the park are important because their health, size and associated ground flora make them suitable for protection purposes. An undisturbed White Pine stand on the southwest shore of Wakami Lake is the only example of this vegetation association known in the park.

The Life Science Inventory identifies several species as "rare" or "important". Unfortunately, the terminology is not the same as that used in current park planning. As a result, further analysis will be required to determine which species are provincially significant and warrant protection via nature reserve zoning. *Pinguicula vulgaris* (butterwort) is considered biologically important in Ontario. *Carex gracillima* (filiform sedge), *Maianthemum canadensis* var. *interius* (western wild lily of the valley), *Cornus alternifolia* (alternate-leaved dogwood), *Cornus rugosa* (round-leaved dogwood), and *Prunus pumila* (sand cherry) are all considered biogeographically important in northern Ontario. All these species are also identified as rare or important in inventories for other parts of the Site District.

7.3.1 Guidelines

- 7.3.1.1 The removal of trees will be permitted only where there is a threat to human safety and/or property; and/or, where it is necessary to meet the park's protection and recreation objectives. Dead, diseased, or wind damaged trees may be removed from developed areas where they pose a potential safety hazard.
- 7.3.1.2 Limited harvesting, using historically authentic techniques will be permitted for demonstration purposes in conjunction with the logging exhibit. Existing trees planted around the exhibit will be maintained.
- 7.3.1.3 Under planting along the road corridor will be discontinued; trees already planted will not be removed.
- 7.3.1.4 No new non-native species will be introduced. Any existing non-native species threatening park values may be eradicated.
- 7.3.1.5 Limited personal consumption of berries and edible wild plants will be permitted in all but the nature reserve zones.
- 7.3.1.6 The occurrence of vegetative insects and diseases, native to the forest region in which the park is situated, is recognized as an integral component of the park's ecology. Insect infestations and diseases will normally be allowed to progress naturally. If such outbreaks threaten values which the park was defined to protect, or other significant features outside the park, they will be controlled where feasible, using biological controls wherever possible.

7.3.1.7 Insects and diseases not native to the park's forest region will be controlled where feasible. When control is undertaken, it will be directed as narrowly as possible to the specific insect or disease, so as to have minimal effects on the balance of the park environment. Biological controls will be used whenever possible.

7.3.1.8 All wild fires will be suppressed until such time as a Park Management Plan defines zoning and a Fire Management Plan reviews the range of options.

7.4 Fisheries

Fish species include Walleye, Northern Pike, Lake Whitefish, Yellow Perch, and White Sucker. Walleye were successfully introduced into Wakami Lake in 1962/63. Imakaw Lake was planted with Brook or Speckled Trout in 1969/70 and should continue as funding permits. Efby Lake supports a natural Northern Pike population.

7.4.1 Guidelines

7.4.1.1 Sport fishing will be encouraged.

7.4.1.2 Management of the sport fishery will be consistent with the provisions of the Chapleau District Fisheries Management Plan, emphasizing the maintenance of a high quality sport fishery for park visitors.

7.4.1.3 The use and/or possession of live bait fish on Wakami Lake will continue to be permitted, though this is contrary to Ontario Provincial Park Planning and Management policy. Traditional angling use has evolved since 1956, with live bait angling comprising a significant component of that use. Therefore, future effects of live bait fish on Wakami Lake would be negligible.

7.4.1.4 Commercial fishing, including commercial bait fishing will not be permitted in the park.

7.4.1.5 A fisheries study will be conducted to determine sustainable harvest levels.

7.5 Wildlife

Wildlife in the park is typical of the northern boreal forest region. Over 100 nesting species of birds have been recorded. The Three-Toed Woodpecker is considered provincially significant. The Solitary Sandpiper, Brewer's Blackbird and Pine Grosbeak are considered regionally significant. Large mammal species such as moose and black bear are fairly common and furbearers such as beaver, mink, lynx, otter, muskrat, fisher, and marten are also evident though rarely seen.

In the past, nuisance black bear have been a problem in the campground and day-use areas. A large bear feeding area has been identified at the south end of Wakami Lake as potentially significant.

7.5.1 Guidelines

- 7.5.1.1** Hunting is not permitted within the park, however, possession of encased, unloaded firearms will be permitted while accessing hunting areas adjacent to the park.
- 7.5.1.2** Animal populations may be controlled when it is essential to protect human health and safety, the health of a species outside the park, or the values for which the park was established. When control is necessary, techniques will be used that have minimal effects on the balance of the resource base. Any hunting or trapping for management purposes will be carried out under the strict supervision of, or directly by, the Ministry of Natural Resources.
- 7.5.1.3** Any wildlife management initiatives which are proposed for the park must be consistent with provincial park policies.
- 7.5.1.4** Park staff will encourage research and develop partnerships to study and assess protection options for the black bear feeding area at the south end of Wakami Lake.
- 7.5.1.5** A bear education program will be set up to inform campers of proper food storage techniques, and how to act during a bear encounter, etc.
- 7.5.1.6** A strategy will be developed to identify situations where bears will be removed. On an interim basis, bears deemed a nuisance will be live trapped and removed from the park. A bear may be destroyed only if there is a direct threat to human life or property.

8.0 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Rich in logging history, Wakami Lake Provincial Park offers visitors the opportunity to learn about logging in the area from the late 1920s to the 1940s. A one kilometre self-guided trail called the Historic Logging Exhibit displays restored logging equipment and buildings. Other cultural resources include various remains of logging camps and trapper cabins along the Height of Land hiking trail, and two native graveyards.

8.1 Guidelines

- 8.1.1** A strategy will be developed to ensure the continued maintenance and upgrading of the logging exhibit.
- 8.1.2** Information will continue to be collected on the cultural history of Wakami.

9.0 NATURAL HERITAGE EDUCATION

Wakami is a seasonal activity level park. The goal of the Natural Heritage Education (NHE) Program is to provide visitors with information, interpretation, and outdoor recreation opportunities related to the resources of the park and surrounding area, as well as a window to the Ministry's other resource management programs. This will contribute to the outdoor recreation, tourism, and heritage appreciation objectives of NHE. The NHE program will increase visitor interest, appreciation, and satisfaction and may result in longer stays and more return visits.

The themes for NHE at Wakami Lake are Forest Industry and forest industry communities (white pine/jack pine logging, lumber camps); northern transitional forest; indigenous peoples; geomorphology; and, wilderness recreation (with emphasis on fishing and fish ecology).

9.1 Guidelines

- 9.1.1 A NHE Strategy will be revised by 1995. It will be reviewed and revised as required.
- 9.1.2 The NHE Strategy will provide direction on the three components: information, interpretation, and outdoor recreation. It will attempt to foster appreciation of the park's natural, cultural, and recreational resources. More details on specific issues will be addressed in appended plans such as publications, trails, etc.
 - 9.1.2.1 Information will be provided to the visitor in the form of park tabloids, newsletters, exhibits and pamphlets.
 - 9.1.2.2 Interpretation will be based on the themes and may include evening programs, guided hikes, etc.
 - 9.1.2.3 Outdoor recreation skills may include backcountry travel (hiking and canoeing), angling, camping and birding techniques, etc.
- 9.1.3 Park visitors will be surveyed regularly through the use of comment cards and orally to determine reaction to park programs.
- 9.1.4 Groups or individuals will be encouraged to use the park resources for outdoor education purposes which are compatible with park policy and protection guidelines. Information about park resources will be made available upon request.

10.0 RESEARCH

10.1 Guidelines

- 10.1.1 All research activities carried out in the park will be in accordance with existing policies governing research in provincial parks, with priority placed on user surveys, recreation inventory, fisheries, and bear management.

11.0 MARKETING

The intent of the park's marketing plan is to encourage increased camping and day-use in both peak and shoulder seasons.

11.1 Guidelines

- 11.1.1 A park marketing plan will be written. Its primary emphasis will be to maintain existing shoulder season markets and increase July/August use. Traditional emphasis has been placed on the north central U.S.A. due to the park's proximity to Sault Ste. Marie, a major entry point.

12.0 REFERENCES

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