



Kakabeka Falls

Park Management Plan





Ontario

NOTE: This document has been scanned and formatted, and therefore is slightly different from the original version. -March 2002

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Dear Sir/Madam:

I am pleased to approve the **Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park Management Plan** as the official policy for the management and development of this park. The plan reflects the Ministry of Natural Resources' and Ontario Parks' intent to protect the natural and cultural features of Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park and maintain and develop high quality opportunities for outdoor recreation and heritage appreciation for the residents of Ontario and visitors to the Province.

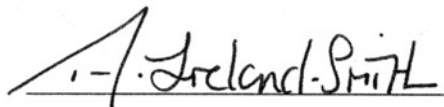
The plan outlines a prioritized implementation strategy for the plan's elements and summarizes the public consultation that occurred as part of the planning process.

The public is given a final opportunity to review the approved Management Plan for a period of forty-five (45) days after its formal release. This allows interested participants in the planning program a final opportunity to determine if their concerns have been considered, and if necessary, to initiate an appeal concerning the plan's contents.

The plan for Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park will be used to guide the management of the park. It may be reviewed to address changing issues or conditions. A mandatory review is to be held after 10 years.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to all those who participated in the public consultation process.

Yours truly,



Adair Ireland-Smith
Managing Director
Ontario Parks



Date

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Statement of Environmental Values and the Environmental Bill of Rights

In accordance with the provisions of **The Environmental Bill of Rights**, the Ministry of Natural Resources prepared a *Statement of Environmental Values*. It describes how the purposes of the Environmental Bill of Rights are to be considered whenever decisions are made which might significantly affect the environment. This includes decisions made as a result of the park management planning process.

The primary purpose of the Environmental Bill of Rights is “to protect conserve and, wherever reasonable, restore the integrity of the environment.” From the Ministry’s perspective, that broad statement of purpose translates into four objectives in its *Statement of Environmental Values*:

- To ensure the long-term health of ecosystems by protecting and conserving our valuable soil, aquatic resources, forest and wildlife resources as well as their biological foundations;
- To ensure the continuing availability of natural resources for the long-term benefit of the people of Ontario;
- To protect natural heritage and biological features of provincial significance; and,
- To protect human life, the resource base and the physical property from the threats of forest fires, floods and erosion.

The Ministry’s *Statement of Environmental Values* has been considered in the development of this Park Management Plan for Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park is located 32 km west of Thunder Bay on the Kaministiquia River in the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge, immediately adjacent to the Village of Kakabeka Falls (population 350 in 1997) (Figure 1).

The park was established in 1957, and since 1967, has been classified as a Natural Environment Park. The park was first regulated under the Provincial Parks Act in 1967 (Ontario Reg. 245/67) and last amended in 1991 (Ontario Reg. 412/91). In May 1991 the park area was increased by adding approximately 150 ha on the south boundary. Presently the park occupies an area of 500 ha.

The park is significantly smaller than the recommended 2,000 ha size for Natural Environment Parks. Its classification reflects the provincial significance of the natural features it was established to protect.

The park contains Kakabeka Falls, one of Northwestern Ontario’s best known natural features. **Kakabeka**, derived from Ojibwa, means **thundering water**. There is a rich cultural history associated with the waterfall, and with the Kaministiquia River. The river was an important water corridor linking Lake Superior to the west. Prior to and during European exploration and the fur trade, Kakabeka Falls represented one of the most formidable obstacles to travel along this route.

In addition to year-round viewing opportunities of the falls, the park offers visitors camping, swimming and picnicking during summer, and cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and snowshoeing during winter. In recent years, visitation has ranged from 250,000 to 300,000 annually, with three-quarters of visitors coming between May and October.

Most visitors enter the park with the singular purpose of viewing the falls. The two principal user groups include highway travellers, who may stop briefly to view the falls or to use the campground, as well as Thunder Bay area residents who travel to the park to view the falls, camp, picnic, swim or ski. Residents of the Village of Kakabeka Falls may easily walk from the town to the day-use facilities.

Kakabeka Falls draws increasing numbers of tourists from the United States, Europe and Asia. Tourism industry trends indicate growing interest in the outdoors, and natural and cultural heritage. The park and the village are well positioned as an international attraction with potential for growth in this market segment.

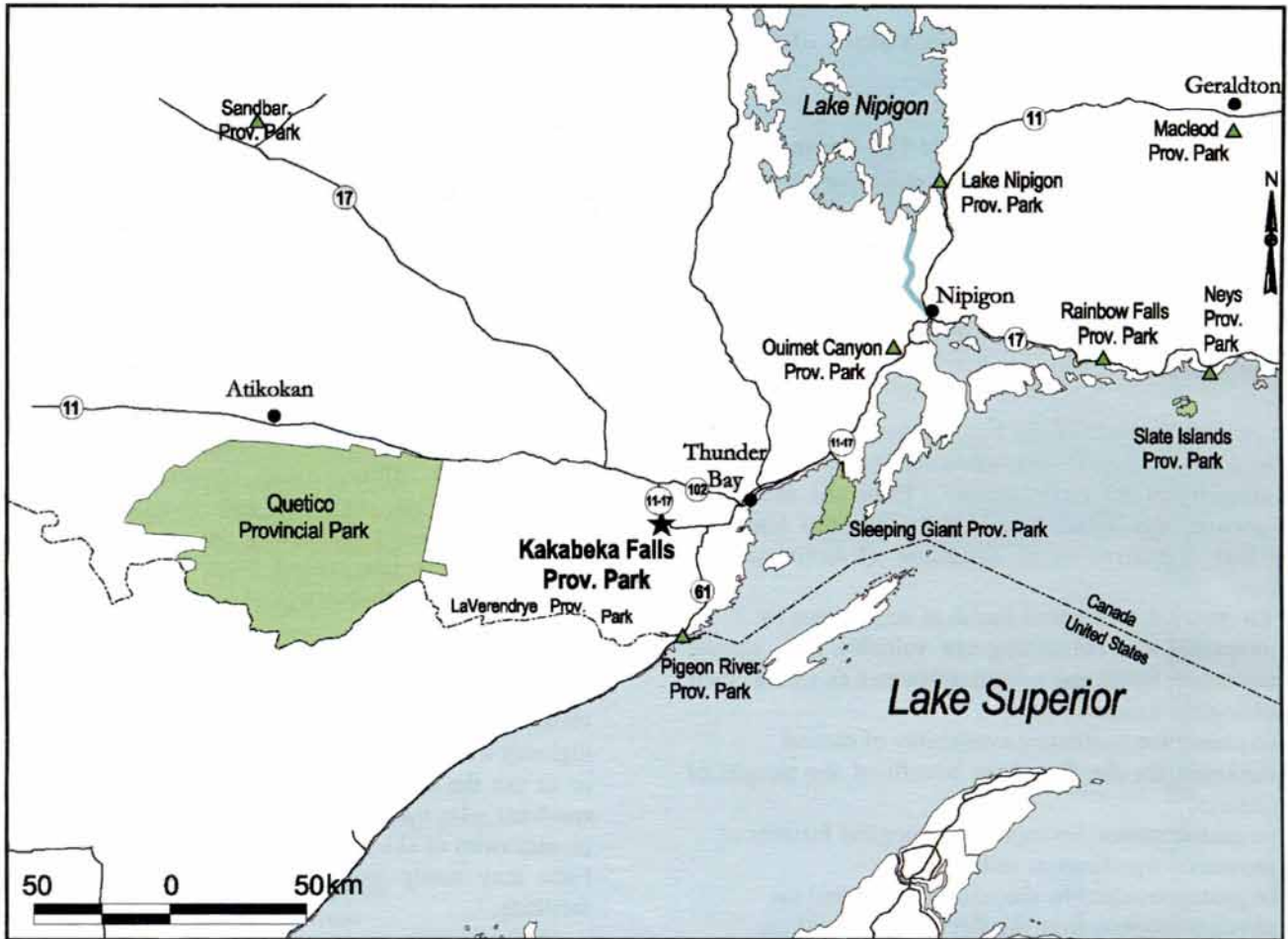
A Park Master Plan was prepared for Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park in 1978. This document provided the background information for the present planning process.

A Minor Amendment was made to the Park Management Plan in 1994 to allow the Ministry of Transportation to undertake maintenance and highway improvement on the right-of-ways within the park for highways 11/17 and 590.

The Park Management Plan has evolved from the public review of the Background Information and the Preliminary Management Plan. This document

replaces the 1978 Master Plan and sets direction for the next 20 years by establishing policy and identifying appropriate development consistent with Ontario Parks goals and objectives.

Figure 1: Regional Setting



2.0 SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ISSUES (Not Ranked)

Park users, local residents, park staff, as well as other groups and individuals, identified the following concerns related to the management of Kakabeka Falls.

2.1 Water Flow over Kakabeka Falls

Adequate water flow over Kakabeka Falls is crucial to the very essence of the park because it determines the aesthetic quality of the viewing experience of the falls. In order to ensure adequate flow, Ontario Parks will formalize an agreement with Ontario Hydro Services Company regarding minimum flow, as well as establishing a long-term framework for water flow. (Refer to sections 8.0 and 8.1.2).

2.2 The Relationship between the Park and the Village of Kakabeka Falls

The relationship of the park and the Village of Kakabeka Falls has a number of unique facets. There is a strong indication in the responses received that the park and the village businesses should cooperate in ways that would be mutually beneficial (e.g. marketing and promotion). Local business people consider the village economy to be dependent upon Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park and perceive that the park is in direct competition with them as its operations become more entrepreneurial. They have expressed their desire to participate in discussions regarding any expansion of commercial activities within the park and marketing of the park.

In order to ensure a positive relationship between the park and the village, Ontario Parks will engage in discussions with representatives of the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge regarding marketing and commercial initiatives that the park may undertake. Ontario Parks will endeavor to optimize opportunities for mutual benefit with the village in marketing and entrepreneurial activities. (Refer to sections 9.0, 9.1.1, 9.2, 9.2.6, 9.3 and 9.4).

2.3 The Greater Park Ecosystem

The greater park ecosystem of Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park considers the ecological, social and economic relationships with the surrounding area, including links to the Village of Kakabeka Falls, the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge, the City of Thunder

Bay, and the Kaministiquia River corridor. Ontario Parks will participate in land use planning initiatives that affect the greater park ecosystem and to connect the park to other natural areas. There are many activities and sites within a short drive that can attract visitors and help keep them in the park area for several days. Ontario Parks will support the provision of information to connect recreational activities and economic benefits both within and around the park. The Park's Natural Heritage Education program will provide information about the park, the parks system and local attractions. (Refer to sections 5.1, 9.0, 9.1.1, 9.2, 9.2.6, 9.3 and 9.4).

2.4 Permitted Uses on the Park Trails

The trail system at Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park is used primarily for hiking and for cross-country skiing, as well as for some interpretation. Natural Environment Zone 2 has been established to provide the flexibility to manage these trails for cross-country skiing in the winter and mountain biking (potentially) and hiking in the summer.

The permitted uses for the Beaver Meadows and River Terrace trails may be expanded to include mountain biking, subject to a trail/site inventory and in accordance with a trail/site plan. To minimize potential conflict between trail users, Ontario Parks may post trail courtesy signage if necessary. To minimize potential impacts to the trails during periods of wet weather and/or during the spring thaw, Ontario Parks will restrict access to the trails by mountain bikes.

During the public consultation for the Preliminary Management Plan, a petition was received from local equestrians requesting access to the Poplar Point, Beaver Meadows and River Terrace trails. The permitted uses on the Poplar Point trail may be expanded to include horseback riding subject to a trail/site inventory and in accordance with a trail/site plan. To minimize potential conflict between trail users Ontario Parks will allow access to the trail by horses only during the snow-free spring and autumn shoulder seasons (e.g. prior to May 15 and after October 1).

Ontario Parks will not permit horseback riding on the River Terrace and Beaver Meadows trails, due to the potential for conflicts with other trail users, as well as the potential for trail erosion, braiding and the introduction of exotic plant species into the park's NR2 zone by way of horse manure. (Refer to sections 7.3, 9.2.4, 9.2.5, and Table 2).

2.5 The Bridge and Traffic Circulation

The structural integrity of the main access bridge over the Kaministiquia River is an ongoing concern. Ontario Parks will continue to monitor the structural integrity of the bridge. In the event that the bridge requires extensive repairs or replacement exceeding available financial resources, Ontario Parks will consider reconfiguration of access to and circulation within the park. (Refer to section 10.1).

3.0 PARK CLASSIFICATION

All provincial parks in Ontario fall into one of six classes: *Wilderness, Nature Reserve, Historical, Natural Environment, Waterway and Recreation*. Natural Environment parks incorporate "outstanding recreational landscapes with representative natural features and historical resources to provide high quality recreational and educational experiences " (Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Guidelines, 1992). Despite its small size of 500 ha, Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park is classified as a Natural Environment park. The Natural Environment status reflects the park's provincially significant natural features, as well as its rich historical legacy and recreational values.

4.0 GOAL

To protect the outstanding landscape and provincially significant natural and cultural features of Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park and to provide opportunities for compatible heritage appreciation, recreation, and tourism activities.

5.0 OBJECTIVES

Ontario's provincial park system has four objectives: protection, recreation, heritage appreciation, and tourism. Each park in the system contributes in some way to each of these objectives, depending on its resource base. Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park contributes to the achievement of all four objectives.

5.1 Protection Objective

To protect the provincially significant natural and cultural features of the park including the falls, the Gunflint formation, and the microfossil site.

Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park contains a variety of natural and cultural resources that are provincially significant. These include:

- The falls;
- The Kaministiquia River which was used as a transportation route by aboriginal people, fur traders, coureurs-de-bois, and explorers travelling westward from Lake Superior; and
- The geological contact between the Archean intrusive rocks and the Proterozoic metasedimentary rocks at the upper rapids area, and
- The algal chert, which contains stromatolites of blue-green algae, some of the oldest known life forms on earth.

The protection objective will be accomplished through appropriate park zoning, resource management policies (land use controls), research, monitoring, and a greater park ecosystem approach to park planning and management. The greater park ecosystem is defined as the area of influence surrounding the park from an ecological, social and economic perspective. It is the area where most of the cross-boundary impacts affecting the park and the surrounding area will occur, and vice versa.

5.1.1 Earth Science

Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park straddles the boundary between the Superior Structural Province and the Southern Structural Province of the Precambrian Shield. The low, rolling topography is familiar to those who have travelled through northwestern Ontario.

Northern portions of the park are in the Superior Structural Province, and consist mainly of granitic rocks, primarily quartz monzonite.

The remainder of the park is underlain by rocks of the Gunflint Formation (Animikie Group) and is in the Southern Structural Province of the Canadian Shield. The Gunflint formation is made up of shale, chert-carbonate, and siliceous iron formation with algal chert. Within the lower algal chert sub-member, there are the remains of very primitive life forms, one-celled organisms that lived within a bioherm called a stromatolite. Believed to be from 1.85 to 2.1 billion years old, these stromatolites are considered to be among some of the oldest known specimens in the world.

The most spectacular feature in the park is Kakabeka Falls, a typical example of a waterfall that has developed along a river course where easily-eroded rocks are overlain by a capping of hard resistant material (Pye, 1969). The falls have a

vertical drop of 39 m, a width of approximately 71 m, and a gorge 30 m deep extending downstream for some 700 m. The falls are the focal point of the park and are important to the region from a geological, historical, and scenic point of view. The formation of this gorge and of Kakabeka Falls is an integral part of the glacial history of Northwestern Ontario.

Glacial Lake Kaministiquia drained through the Kaministiquia spillway into a post-Duluth glacial lake called Lake Beaver Bay. The Kaministiquia spillway, in conjunction with the Kashabowie spillway north of Dog Lake, became a major drainage channel for the melting ice lobes. The large volumes of glacial meltwater provided the force required to deepen the fractured zone in the Kaministiquia spillway bed, thus forming the gorge and Kakabeka Falls (Grootenboer, 1971).

Earth science values are protected within Nature Reserve and Natural Environment zones.

5.1.2 Life Science

The park is located within the northern limit of the Quetico Section of the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Forest Region and the southern boundary of the Superior Section of the Boreal Forest Region (Rowe, 1972). Consequently, the park's vegetation is transitional and representative of both forest regions. Vegetation consists of trembling aspen, white birch and jack pine mixed with white spruce and balsam fir on higher ground, while black spruce and birch favour low-lying areas. The prominence of these boreal species results from disturbances such as logging, fire and agriculture. Some black ash and American elm, typical of more southerly areas, are found adjacent to the river's edge. Moss species are well established on the vertical rock faces of the gorge where they are subject to spray from the falls.

The wildlife of the park is typical of the Boreal Forest Region and includes black bear, moose, white-tailed deer, beaver, snowshoe hare, red fox, striped skunk, and chipmunk. Wolf, porcupine and raccoon are transient park residents. Avifauna includes ruffed grouse, raven, wood warblers, and thrushes. Leopard frog, boreal chorus frog, spring peeper, common toad, eastern garter snake, and blue spotted salamander reside within the park.

Kakabeka Falls represents an insurmountable obstacle to fish travelling up the Kaministiquia River. Eighteen species have been identified in the four kilometers below the falls. The major species living in the river near the falls are white sucker, walleye,

northern pike, burbot, and smallmouth bass. Salmon have been introduced to the Kaministiquia River from a hatchery that is located adjacent to the hydro generating station, across the river from the park. Sturgeon are also inhabitants of the Kaministiquia River.

Life science values are protected within Nature Reserve and Natural Environment zones.

5.2 Heritage Appreciation Objective

To provide both structured and individual opportunities for exploration and appreciation of the natural and cultural heritage of Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park, including early inhabitants, exploration, the fur trade, and industrial heritage, as well as the earth and life science features of the park.

Unstructured self-use facilities such as trails, displays and viewing platforms, allow users to experience a dramatic landscape that illustrates a chronology of geological events and processes spanning two billion years. The park's variable terrain provides excellent vantage points for observing dynamic, ongoing processes associated with the modern day Kakabeka Falls. This objective will be achieved through the provision of accurate up-to-date information to park visitors regarding the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the park using signage, park literature, trail guides and interpretive displays.

Staff-led interpretation programs based from the Visitor Centre / Amphitheatre during July and August will provide park visitors with the opportunity to appreciate and understand the area's natural and cultural resources. Themes include early exploration, the fur trade, the logging era and hydroelectric development, as well as the park's earth and life science features.

A Natural Heritage Education Plan will be developed to guide the operation of the park's Visitor Centre / Amphitheatre.

5.3 Tourism Objective

To provide both Ontario residents and out-of-province visitors with opportunities to discover and to experience the unique natural and cultural features of Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park, through the provision of year-round viewing opportunities as well as seasonal day-use, car-camping and tourism facilities and services.

Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park receives the highest annual visitation of any provincial park in Northwestern Ontario. Total visitation for the park can account for more than one third of all park visitation for the Northwest Zone. In 1999, 286,913 visitors came to Kakabeka Falls, while total park visitation for the zone was 786,372. In the same operating season, Kakabeka Falls received 254,031 day-users that accounted for approximately 71% of total day-use for Northwest Zone (353,661). Most people visit Kakabeka for the single purpose of viewing the falls.

The relatively high levels of visitation for the park are due to the combination of the attraction of the falls and its accessibility. The Trans Canada Highway, with heavy vacation traffic in the summer months, passes directly through the park. Tourists travelling this route participate primarily in viewing the falls, with day use and stopover camping. The park's proximity to Thunder Bay attracts area residents for viewing, camping, and day-use activities. Day-trippers from Northern Minnesota also make the park a primary destination.

Tourism industry trends such as an aging population, increasing concern for the environment, and interest in educational experiences, indicate market growth potential for soft adventure and ecotourism. Examples of products include experiences in natural environments/cultural heritage with packaging of wildlife/scenic viewing, water- and land-based recreation. Trend analyses of visitors from overseas (Europe and Asia) indicates strong interest in the outdoors, natural and cultural heritage, especially that of First Nations. Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park and the surrounding locale are well positioned as an international attraction where there is opportunity for growth with independent tourists, package tours, bus tours, and Great Lakes cruises.

Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park provides day-use and camping opportunities for stopover visitors travelling Highway 11/17 as well as travellers specifically destined to view the falls.

The tourism objective is achieved by having an outstanding natural feature with the high quality infrastructure and customer service that will optimize opportunities to attract and retain visitors.

5.4 Recreation Objective

To provide park visitors with opportunities for recreation such as camping, picnicking, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, swimming, cross-country skiing and viewing, through the provision of appropriate facilities and services.

Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park provides opportunities for a variety of high quality recreational uses compatible with the character of the park.

The park provides day-use opportunities for viewing the falls from viewing pods or by hiking along the gorge trails, as well as using the beach area for family picnics and swimming. During the winter, the park provides high quality cross-country skiing opportunities. Part of the Trans-Provincial Snowmobile Trail passes through the park. The TransCanada Trail, a multi purpose trail initiative, will be accommodated for trail uses that are permissible within the park.

The recreation objective will be achieved through appropriate development and natural environment zoning; the identification of management policies to prevent any compromise of significant natural and/or cultural heritage values; market research and monitoring; and mitigating impacts of recreational use. Any outdoor recreation skills programs will be compatible with the park's resource base and will relate to the park's themes.

6.0 PARK BOUNDARY

Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park is bounded by the Kaministiquia River on the east while the west boundary is essentially Lucken's Road. The north and south boundaries coincide with township and concession survey lines in the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge, Conmee and O'Connor townships (Figure 2). Contiguous park expansion is limited to the west by roads, to the north by **Ontario Power Generation** development and to the east by the Kaministiquia River, **Ontario Power Generation** development and the Village of Kakabeka Falls. If any lands nearby or adjacent to the park become available for acquisition, they will be evaluated with regard to their contribution to park objectives and available funding.

The park is bisected by the Trans-Canada Highway, Highway 11-17, the major east-west link in this part of Ontario, and by Highway 590. The land surrounding the park is predominantly patented. Most of this land, which was once farmed, can now be classified as non-farm residential or speculative property. Adjacent to the park are highway rights-of-way, a hydro dam, an aqueduct, a generating

station, the CNR line, an Ontario Ministry of Transportation yard, and a gravel pit. The park contains a hydroelectric and telephone transmission line, and a small research plantation.

7.0 PARK ZONING

Zoning is a key part of a Park Management Plan. Zones fulfill a variety of functions that include:

- Providing recognition of the features and attributes of a park;
- Delineating areas on the basis of their requirements to protect and buffer provincially significant representative features;
- Delineating areas on the basis of their ability to support various recreational activities; and
- Identifying uses that will protect significant features, yet allow opportunities for recreation and heritage education. (Tables 1 and 2).

The four zones, which will guide the resource management and development of Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park, are Development, Natural Environment, Nature Reserve and Historical (Figure 2).

7.1 Nature Reserve Zones

Nature Reserve zones include significant earth and life science features that require management distinct from that in adjacent zones as well as a protective buffer with a minimum of development. Development is limited to trails, signs and temporary facilities for research and management.

Nature Reserve Zone 1 (8 ha) (Contact Zone)

Nature Reserve Zone 1 incorporates two significant earth science features, the geological contact and the microfossils. The primary role of Nature Reserve Zone 1 is to highlight the significance of these resources. The contact, adjacent to the heavily used beach-picnicking area, is durable. The microfossils, although sensitive to sample collection, are afforded a degree of natural protection by the site's small size and relatively isolated location.

Nature Reserve Zone 2 (287 ha) (Terrace Zone)

This zone is comprised of the southern half of the park. It protects a variety of earth science features and associated processes related to the Kaministiquia River spillway-gorge complex. The zone's primary resources are highly durable by most indicators of resource fragility, and not generally

dependent upon restrictive management policies. Low-intensity recreational use, emphasizing resource appreciation and interpretation is permitted. Acceptable recreation activities include hiking, snowshoeing, viewing, photography and nature study. Natural Environment Zone 2 (Corridor) is located within this zone.

7.1.1 Zone Management Policies

Management will be directed towards the maintenance of an evolving natural succession, unless the rationale for an alternative approach can be documented.

7.2 Historical Zone

Historical zones protect the provincially significant cultural resources of a park which require management distinct from that of other zones. They generally focus on a specific site (e.g. building) and its relationship to the surrounding landscape. Historical zones support the minimum development required for visitor exploration and appreciation, and scientific research.

Historical Zone (8 ha) (The Mountain Portage)

This zone has been established to ensure that proper recognition is granted to the park's most important historical element - *The Mountain Portage*. Recreational opportunities vary within the zone. In addition to historical interpretation, the upland portion of the zone contains viewing opportunities of the falls, the main gorge and the northern edge of the western gorge. It also contains geomorphologic features associated with the formation of both the main and the western gorges. Development in this zone consists of viewing pods, interpretive displays and a network of interconnecting trails. The Mountain Portage Trail is constructed to a condition and alignment that approximates that of the original route.

7.2.1 Zone Management Policies

New development is limited to trails, necessary signs, interpretive, educational, research and management facilities, and historical reconstruction where appropriate. All decisions regarding the type, extent and location of facilities must be supported by a site inventory. All development will be carried out in accordance with approved site and development plans; will conform to high standards of historical authenticity; and will complement the historical resource.

7.3 Natural Environment Zones

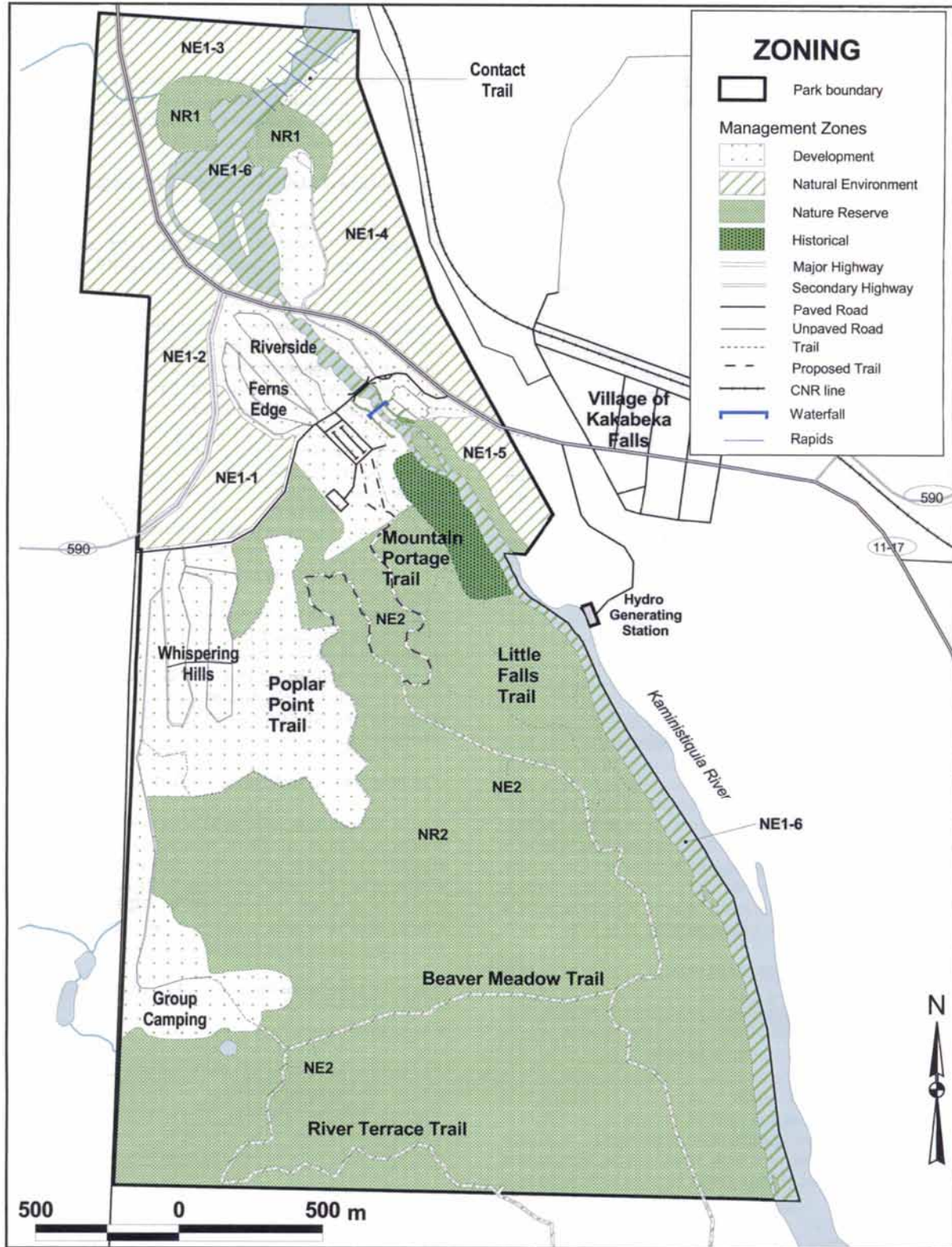
Natural Environment zones include important natural and cultural landscapes in which minimum development is required to support low-intensity recreational activities. Development is limited to simple facilities. Natural Environment zones often serve as buffers between Development or Access zones and the more protective Historical or Nature Reserve zones.

Natural Environment Zone 1 (102 ha) (Buffer Zone)

Natural Environment Zone 1 has six parts.

Part one (10 ha), part two (28 ha), and part three (26 ha) occupy the northeastern corner of the park, north of Highway 590 and Highway 11-17, and west of the Kaministiquia River. These portions possess relatively low capabilities to sustain use and associated development.

Figure 2: Park Zoning



Their primary function is to ensure visual aesthetics and site protection.

Part four (16 ha) has two purposes: the granitic outcrop provides an alternative for low-intensity recreation, such as hiking and nature appreciation, adjacent to the high-intensity activity of the beach-picnicking area; it also serves as a visual buffer for the development to the east and southeast.

Part five (6 ha) functions as a visual buffer between the Kaministiquia River and the Village of Kakabeka Falls.

Part six (14 ha) consists of the Kaministiquia River bed.

Natural Environment Zone 2 (8 ha) (Corridor Zone)

Natural Environment Zone 2 is the six metre wide trail corridor through the Nature Reserve Zone 2 for the Beaver Meadows and River Terrace trails. This zone is intended to provide the flexibility to manage these trails for cross-country skiing in the winter and mountain biking (potentially) and hiking in the summer.

7.3.1 Zone Management Policies

Management will normally be directed towards the maintenance of an evolving natural succession, unless the rationale for an alternative approach can be documented. Existing and new development is limited to trails and signs. Development will be supported by a resource inventory and will be undertaken in accordance with approved site and development plans. Details on the proposed new trail in this zone can be found in section 9.2.4 (Trails).

7.4 Development Zone

Development zones provide the main access to the park and facilities for a wide range of day-use and camping activities. They constitute a relatively small portion of most parks. Development may include roads, visitor control structures, beaches, picnic areas, campgrounds, commercial service facilities, and orientation, interpretive, educational, research and management facilities. One development zone has been designated in Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park.

Development Zone (97 ha)

The development zone incorporates the existing area of intensive recreational use and development, including the beach-picnicking area, the falls viewing area, the Visitor Centre, the Ferns Edge and Riverside campgrounds, the Whispering Hills campground, the Group Camping area, the Portage Group Camping area, the Poplar Point Trail, the existing roads and bridges and the maintenance and office areas. Resource management will maintain the integrity of the resource base where it is subjected to the impacts of use and development. The zone's cultural resources (three recognized archaeological sites) will be managed as funds permit. Recreational opportunities provided within the zone include viewing, interpretation, education, swimming, picnicking, hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding (potentially), car camping, and group camping. Hot-air balloon departure may also be permitted in this zone. Judicious site selection and facility design will be the principal agents for effective integration of such diverse and potentially conflicting activities.

7.4.1 Zone Management Policies

Development will be subject to a site inventory to mitigate detrimental impacts on the values of the park. All development will be carried out in accordance with approved site and development plans. Archeological sites will be protected.

New development may include signs, secondary and tertiary roads, park administration and maintenance facilities, utilities, staff facilities, beaches, picnic areas, alternative accommodation, campgrounds, stores, displays and facilities for natural heritage education, research and management.

8.0 RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP POLICIES

The management of Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park natural and cultural resources will conform with the policies identified for Natural Environment class parks in [Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Guidelines](#) 1992. Additional policy direction is provided in the following section.

8.1 Natural Resources

8.1.1 Landform

The management of the park's land base will be directed towards maintaining the natural landscape. Mineral exploration and mining are prohibited within the

boundaries of the park. Aggregate extraction from sources within the park is prohibited. Aggregate for park purposes will be acquired from commercial sources outside the park.

Erosion control work to protect park values and public safety is permitted in the Development, Historical, and Natural Environment 1 zones. Monitoring the stability of the bedrock footings for the viewing pods and the walkways will be ongoing to ensure visitor safety. Restorative capping of the eastern side of Kakabeka Falls was completed in 1989. The rate of the recession of the lip of the falls will be monitored on an ongoing basis. In the event of significant erosion, restorative capping may be undertaken subject to completion of an Environmental Study Report in accordance with Ontario Parks Policy.

8.1.2 Water

The Kaministiquia River is the significant aquatic resource of the park, providing the falls viewing opportunity as well as the water and shoreline areas for the beach activities. There are several small ephemeral streams draining into the Kaministiquia River within the park. The most important of these is a wetland area that enters the park from the south and drops over a small scenic waterfall before entering the Kaministiquia River.

Water quality for fisheries habitat and recreational purposes will be maintained.

Water quality, adjacent to development zones and where camping occurs, will be monitored on a regular basis in accordance with Provincial health standards.

Several dams in the Kaministiquia River headwaters as well as a dam immediately adjacent to the park on the northeast boundary control the Kaministiquia River water flow.

Water flow over Kakabeka Falls will be maintained at the following level as currently practiced by Ontario Hydro Services Company and the Ministry of Natural Resources:

- Scenic water for Kakabeka Falls during daylight hours of the tourist season (May 24 to Thanksgiving weekend, inclusive) is 4.25 m³/sec on weekdays and 8.5 m³/sec on weekends and statutory holidays.

Ontario Parks will formalize this current operating practice.

In light of the divestment process that is being undertaken by the former Ontario Hydro, and the pending individual water management planning processes for the province's hydro plants, Ontario Parks will remain vigilant to ensure that the scenic water flow levels will be maintained and any formal or informal waterflow agreement will be included/reconfirmed.

8.1.3 Vegetation

Management of vegetation within the park will be directed towards the maintenance of an evolving natural succession of communities.

Commercial timber harvesting is prohibited within the park.

Infestations of forest insects and diseases will be monitored and assessed. Non-native species will be controlled, and native species may be controlled. If control measures are undertaken, they will be applied to minimize effects on the general park environment. Biological controls will be used wherever possible.

The removal of hazard trees will be permitted in all zones where safety is a concern (e.g. trails, and campgrounds). Areas experiencing adverse use impacts will be rehabilitated whenever possible using plant species native to the park. Landscaping will be permitted in the development zones.

Brushing along primary and secondary roads will be permitted to improve sight lines and/or traffic flow.

Herbicide applications will be discouraged for vegetation management.

Development that necessitates the removal of vegetation will be supported by a vegetation inventory in accordance with approved site plans.

8.1.4 Fire

Given the small size of the park, the capital investment within the park, and the surrounding private land, natural and human caused fires in all zones will be suppressed. Fire suppression techniques which have the least residual impact on the park's natural environment will be used whenever possible. Prescribed burning may be used to replace natural processes under the proper circumstances.

8.1.5 Wildlife

Wildlife management may be undertaken on an “as required” basis in order to protect the health and safety of the park visitors or to protect park facilities.

Hunting is prohibited, by regulation, within the boundaries of Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park.

Commercial fur trapping is prohibited within the boundaries of Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park.

Nuisance animals will be trapped and removed under the supervision of, or directly by Ontario Parks staff. This control will be exercised as a last resort when it is essential for the protection of human health and safety, the health of animal species, or the protection of infrastructure.

Status Indians having treaty rights to carry out traditional natural resource harvesting activities shall be permitted to carry on these activities in accordance with the terms of their treaty within their treaty areas.

Table 1: Resource Stewardship Policies by Zone Category for Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park

<i>RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICIES</i>	<i>PARK ZONES</i>			
	<i>D</i>	<i>NR</i>	<i>HI</i>	<i>NE</i>
<i>Lands and Waters</i>				
Mineral exploration / extraction				
Aggregate extraction				
Commercial hydro development				
Water control structures (new)	Y	M	M	Y
Land disposition – commercial outpost camps, lodges				
<i>Flora</i>				
Vegetation Management	Y	M	M	Y
Commercial logging				
Insect / disease suppression				
• Native	Y		M	M
• Non-native	Y	Y	Y	Y
Fire suppression				
• Natural & Human-caused	Y	Y	Y	Y
Prescribed burning		M	M	M*
<i>Fauna</i>				
Commercial trapping	Status Indians only			
Wildlife population management	M	M	M	M
Bait fishing				
Fish stocking				
• Native species	Y		Y	Y
• Non-native species				
Fish habitat management	Y	M	M	Y
<i>Recreation Management</i>				
Commercial tourist operations				
• New	M			
Restrictions on vehicles, aircraft, motor boats				
• Private	M	Y	Y	M
• Commercial	M	Y	Y	M

Legend Note: This table does not include policies/zones that are not relevant to /present in Kakabeka Falls Park.

Y compatible in zone category

Blank not permitted

M may be required

Ma may be encouraged if authentic to the historic

zone

M* in the event of a prescribed fire in the NR2, it would not be possible to exclude the NE2

Table 2: Permitted Recreational Uses By Park Zone for Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park

ACTIVITIES AND FACILITIES	ZONES					
	NE 1	NE 2	NR 1	NR 2	D	H
All terrain Vehicle (ATV) Travel						
Hot Air Balloon (take-off)					M	
Boating (powered) commercial	M					
private	M					
Campgrounds Car					Y	
Group					Y	
Canoeing-Kayaking	M					
Demonstration Areas (e.g. logging Exhibits)					M	Ma
Hiking	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Historical Appreciation – self guided	M	M	M	Y	Y	Y
Horseback Riding – Designated Trail					M	
Mountain Biking - Designated Trails		M			Y	
Nature Appreciation – self guided	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Orienteering	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Painting/Photography	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Picnic Grounds					Y	
Playgrounds					Y	
Recreation Programs (organized)		Y			Y	Ma
Resorts/Lodges					M	
Restaurants – food and beverage					M	
Rock / Ice Climbing						
Skiing – cross-country		Y		M	Y	
Snowshoeing	Y		Y	Y	Y	M
Ice Skating					Y	
Tobogganing – Designated Hill					Y	
Snowmobiling- Designated Trail					Y	
Sport Fishing	Y			Y		
Swimming – facility based					Y	

Legend Note: activities not in this list are prohibited within the park (e.g. scuba & skin diving, sailing and sailboarding, spelunking, sport hunting, outfitting services, commercial outpost camps)

Y permitted use in designated zone

Blank not permitted

M may be permitted in designated zone

Ma may be encouraged if authentic to the historic zone

8.1.6 Fisheries

The Thunder Bay District Fisheries Management Plan identifies strategies for the Kaministiquia River, but not specifically for the park.

Rehabilitation of degraded walleye habitat may occur.

Sport fishing is permitted in the park. All fishing activity will be subject to the policies and regulations of Division 21 of the Ontario Fishing Regulations. Fishing at the base of the falls is becoming more popular. The Park Superintendent may restrict sport fishing at certain times and locations for the purposes of fisheries management and/or public safety.

Stocking and spawn collection by permit is allowed.

Commercial fishing and commercial bait fishing are prohibited in park waters.

Status Indians having treaty rights to carry out traditional natural resource harvesting activities shall be permitted to carry on these activities in accordance with the terms of their treaty within their treaty areas.

8.2 Cultural Resources

The focus of cultural/heritage representation in Ontario Parks is the protection of significant landscape-related cultural resources. Kakabeka Falls contains four archaeological and historic sites, representing the Paleo-Indian occupation, the Laurel culture and the Fur Trade. Cultural resources will be managed to ensure their protection, and to provide opportunities for heritage appreciation and research where these activities do not impair the resource. This will be achieved through zoning and by controlling any recreational activities, development and research that may occur in these areas.

Ontario Parks will continue to work with the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation in the inventory, protection and maintenance of archaeological and historic sites. If deemed appropriate for the protection and preservation of cultural resources, such inventory may include excavations of archaeological sites. Excavations by authorized licensed personnel with appropriate research permits will be conducted under the approval and supervision of the above Ministries. Upon completion of an excavation, the site or portions of the site will be returned to their original condition, or will be developed for the purposes of interpreting the cultural resources of the site. The type and extent of

such development will be determined by the findings from the excavation.

Periodic inspection of significant sites will occur with protective controls established as required. The removal of artifacts or destruction of historical features is illegal and is prohibited. Additional significant archaeological discoveries may necessitate alterations to future development plans.

9.0 OPERATIONAL POLICIES

Operations policies deal with topics such as Natural Heritage Education, recreation management, and the provision of recreation services, business planning and research. The Park Operating Plan provides park staff with the necessary information required to operate the park on a day-to-day basis. In addition to addressing operations policies, the Operating Plan will include such topics as budget, staffing, maintenance schedules, enforcement and emergency services. The provisions of the Operating Plan will be consistent with the approved Ontario Provincial Parks Minimum Operating Standards (1992). The Operating Plan will be reviewed annually and revised as required.

A Sign Plan will be prepared.

9.1 Natural Heritage Education

As outlined in the Strategic Plan for Natural Heritage Education in Ontario Parks (1997), the goal of the Natural Heritage Education (NHE) program is to develop visitor awareness and appreciation of Ontario Parks' natural and cultural heritage, fostering a commitment to its protection for all generations. Opportunities to do so will be educational and recreational, formal and informal, and accessible to all people.

The objectives of the Natural Heritage Education program are to provide basic information in all parks; interpretation of Ontario's natural and cultural heritage in Provincial Parks; and outdoor recreation in representative landscapes in Ontario. There are three levels of NHE service in the Provincial Parks' system: *Self-use, Seasonal, and Major Activity*. Kakabeka Falls presently offers a seasonal level of programming.

A Natural Heritage Education Plan will be prepared for Kakabeka Falls. Direction will be taken from provincial policy, the Northwest Zone Natural Heritage Education Plan, and the Park Management Plan. Kakabeka Falls Natural Heritage Education

plan will be reviewed and updated annually. The scope and intent of all Natural Heritage Education activities will be carefully defined to ensure their compatibility with park features.

The Visitor Centre/Amphitheatre offers a central location for Natural Heritage Education programs and self-guided heritage appreciation and recreation opportunities. The Park Store is presently located in the Visitor Centre. The Visitor Centre may be expanded for use as a trailhead facility for cross-country skiing.

9.1.1 Park Information

The public information program (Parks Guide, park tabloid and the Ontario Parks website) will be continued. It will provide visitors with information about the park and its resources, environment and facilities. This information emphasizes the visitor's role in maintaining the natural environment of the park, appropriate behaviour in the park, safety in the outdoors, and nuisance animals. Park literature will also advise visitors about commercial services and attractions in the Village of Kakabeka Falls, the local area and other provincial parks.

The park map and brochures enable visitors to explore and use the park. A "respect the environment" ethic is promoted in order to minimize human impact on the park environment. The importance of respecting other users is also stressed.

9.1.2 Interpretation

Interpretive programs and facilities provide park visitors with a greater appreciation for and understanding of the natural and cultural features of Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park. Interpretive programs, printed material, self-use facilities and informal personal contact will be the primary means of interpretation. The park's primary interpretive theme relates to its geological significance (Geology and Landscape) and how this geology has affected cultural activities (e.g. the use of this section of the Kaministiquia River by fur traders; the timber industry having to divert logs around Kakabeka Falls, the industrial history of hydroelectric development). Other themes include Pre-European settlement, Early European Exploration, Logging Era, Boreal Forest and Wildlife. Innovative ways of cooperative portrayal of these themes will be pursued with other agencies.

9.1.3 Recreation

Basic recreation information provided on the park map will acquaint visitors with the attributes of the park, its dangers (e.g. vertical cliffs) and safety considerations.

Outdoor recreation skills programs will be compatible with the park's resource base and the park's themes, and may include hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, camping and orienteering

9.2 Recreation Management

Recreation management provides a variety of recreational opportunities while aspiring to minimize environmental impacts in recognition of the park's significant landscape. Recreational activities that are incompatible with the park goal or with specific zones are prohibited or restricted. Prevention and control of such activities will be achieved through education of park visitors concerning appropriate uses in the park in general and within specific zones (Figure 3 and Table 2).

9.2.1 Viewing Pods and Boardwalks

In 1981, viewing pods were built along both sides of the gorge to mitigate the compaction and erosion impacts of the large numbers of visitors viewing the falls. A program is in place to monitor the stability of the bedrock on which the viewing pods have been built. Monitoring will continue and, if the need arises, the viewing pods and boardwalks will be modified and/or redeveloped to maintain an acceptable standard of public safety. Any changes or development of new pods and boardwalks will be supported by a site inventory in accordance with approved site and development plans.

9.2.2 Day Use Areas

Most visitors who come to view the falls, park in the lot on the east bank of the river. In 1996, a pay and display fee collection system was installed in order to collect fees on a year-round basis. Visitors also use parking lots near the Information Centre and at the beach area. There are 560 parking spaces.

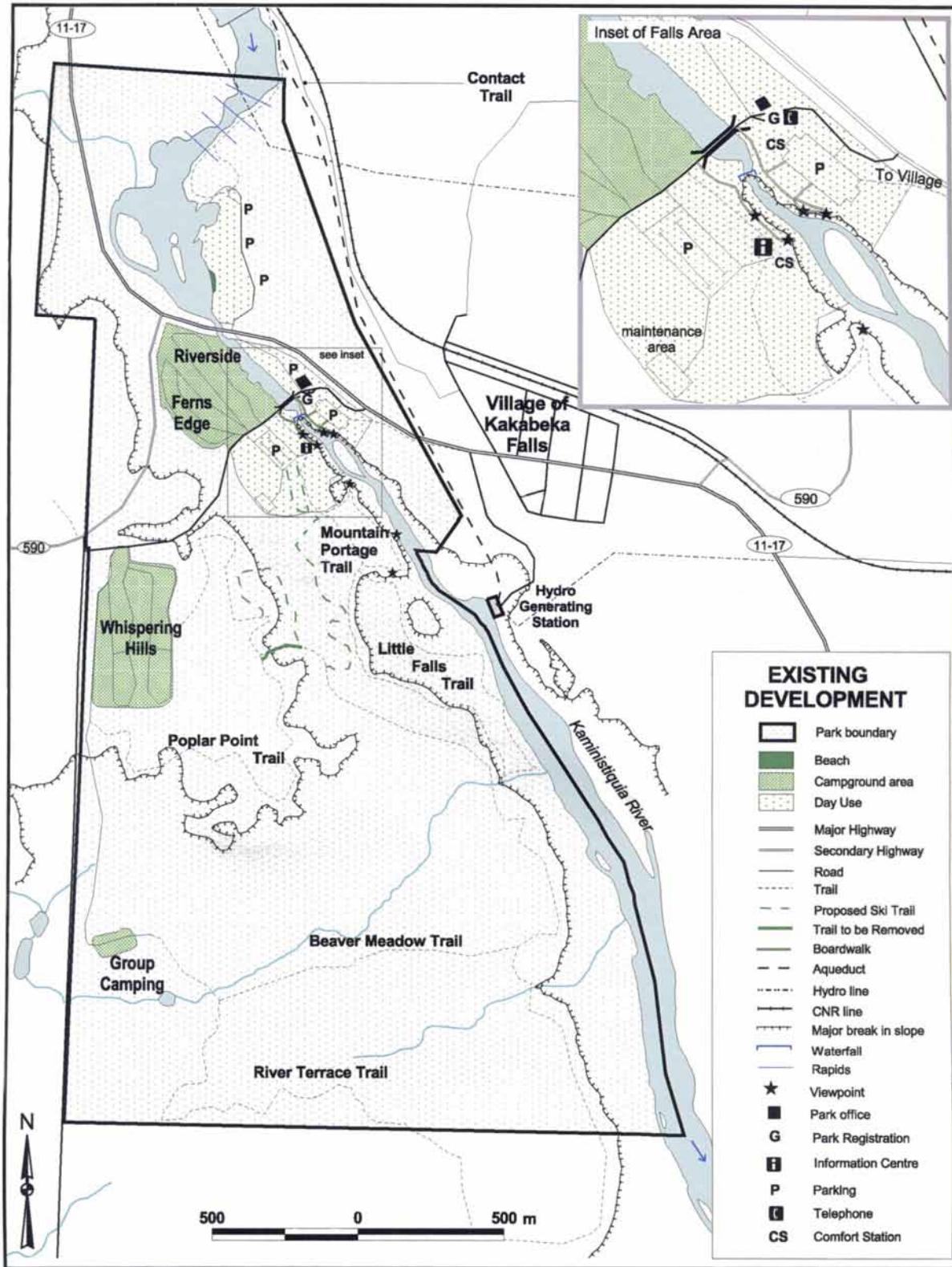
9.2.3 Campgrounds

Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park has two main campgrounds with a total of 169 sites, 90 of which have electrical service. The July/August occupancy of 69% (1999) is greater than the Northwest Zone average (57%). Kakabeka Falls has a higher than

average proportion of recreational vehicle users compared to other provincial parks.

The Riverside and Ferns Edge campgrounds will be monitored to ensure their continued viability; this will include necessary improvements to bring them to Ontario Parks' operating standards. Should the need for additional / replacement sites be justified, development of up to 117 sites in the Whispering Hills campground will be undertaken, as per the 1978 site plan.

Figure 3: Existing Development



Waste disposal sites and dumping are prohibited within the park. Garbage collection facilities will be located in the development zones only. Waste generated by park users will be disposed outside the park at an established facility.

9.2.4 Trails

The trail system at Kakabeka Falls experiences moderate use by campers and day-use visitors. The system's popularity for cross-country skiing is well established. Use levels are showing some growth.

- The Poplar Point trail (3.6 km) permits walking, automobiles and mountain bikes, and may permit horseback riding (subject to a trail/site inventory and in accordance with a trail site plan);
- The River Terrace loop (3.6 km) permits hiking, cross-country skiing, and may permit mountain biking, (subject to a trail/site inventory and in accordance with a trail/site plan);
- The Beaver Meadows trail (5.6 km) permits hiking, cross-country skiing, and may permit mountain biking, (subject to a trail/site inventory and in accordance with a trail/site plan);
- The Contact trail (1.0 km) permits hiking;
- The Little Falls trail (3.0 km) permits hiking and snowshoeing; and
- The Mountain Portage trail (1.2 km) permits hiking and snowshoeing, and is barrier free.

Ontario Parks may post trail courtesy signage as required to minimize potential conflict between trail users.

Ontario Parks will restrict access to the trails by mountain bikes during periods of wet weather or during the spring thaw to minimize potential impacts to the trails. The use of mountain bikes is permitted only on designated trails; off-trail biking is not permitted.

Horseback riding is prohibited on the Beaver Meadows and River Terrace trails, due to the potential for conflicts with other trail users, as well as the width of the corridor and the potential for trail erosion, braiding (where horses compact a narrow section of trail into a trough and subsequent users create a widening and/or branching of the trail), and the introduction of exotic plant species into the park's NR2 zone by way of horse manure.

The Poplar Point trail will be evaluated for horseback

riding as a permitted use, because the trail is an old roadbed whose width will deter linear travel and the potential for braiding. The use of the trail by horses will be restricted to the spring/fall shoulder season, (e.g. prior to May 15 and after October 1), to reduce the potential for conflicts between automobiles, horses, bicycles, and pedestrians. Riders will be responsible for the removal and disposal of horse droppings from the trail, or access privileges to the trail will be revoked.

Motorized use of the Beaver Meadows, River Terrace, Contact and Little Falls trails is prohibited with the exception of service and emergency vehicles.

Existing road, rail and utility line corridors through the park are a permitted non-conforming use. New road, rail and utility line corridors will not be permitted within the park boundary.

The TransCanada Trail, a multi purpose trail initiative, will be accommodated for trail uses that are permissible within the park.

9.2.5 Winter Use

Winter use of Kakabeka Falls is dominated by short stopover viewing of the falls. However, day-use cross-country skiing on the trail system has continued to grow in popularity. This is due to the promotion of Kakabeka Falls as part of the Nordic Trail package that includes Sleeping Giant Provincial Park and the Kamview Nordic Ski Area.

A portion of the Trans-Provincial Snow Machine Trail passes through the development zone of Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park. It uses the existing road corridors. Snow machine use in the park is restricted to this corridor.

The abandoned toboggan hill will be assessed for continued use. Ice skating on a rink in the Development zone may also be considered.

Ontario Parks will continue to support the winter day-use of Kakabeka Falls. Support will be realized through the provision of groomed ski trails, the re-alignment of extremely steep trails subject to site inventory, the development and adaptation/expansion of the Visitor Centre as a trailhead facility, and the relocation of the existing Nordic ski trailhead to the Visitor Centre.

9.2.6 Greater Park Ecosystem

Within the context of the greater park ecosystem, it is important to consider the ecological, social and economic relationships that Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park has with the surrounding area. Especially important is the ecological link between the park and the Kaministiquia River corridor and watershed. Social and economic links include the Village of Kakabeka Falls, the Municipality of Oliver Paipoonge, and the City of Thunder Bay whose residents and businesses either visit the park and/or utilize the Falls as an anchor/draw for recreation activities and/or for business opportunities.

The regulation of the water flow of the Kaministiquia River by Ontario Hydro Services Company, whose primary purpose is the operation of dams to generate hydro power, is one example of ecological impacts on the park. Ontario Parks will participate in watershed management planning processes to protect park values associated with the Kaministiquia River. Ontario Parks will pursue opportunities to participate in land use planning initiatives that affect the greater park ecosystem and to connect the park to other natural areas. Ontario Parks will also endeavor to optimize the relationship between the park and the village businesses.

Examples of recreation activities that cross park boundaries include the potential use of the park as part of the Trans Canada Trail, the Trans-Provincial Snow Machine Trail, and the Kaministiquia River as a hiking, fishing and paddling corridor. Associated groups and sites include the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority's Cedar Falls Conservation Area; Old Fort William and interpretation of the fur trade; the Thunder Bay Kayak and Canoe Club which uses the Hume Gorge upstream from the park; and the Kaministiquia River Corridor Group which is examining recreation opportunities along the river. Ontario Parks will provide support in the form of information to park visitors and participation by staff in local and regional initiatives to assist in the coordination of recreation opportunities that are compatible with park values. Ontario Parks will seek to maintain a supportive working relationship /dialogue with groups and agencies that share the greater park ecosystem.

9.2.7 Alternative Accommodation

A variety of factors will, over time, affect the demographic profile of park users. Those factors include the influence of the aging 'baby boomers', immigration, recreation, and travel preferences. The 1997 Ontario Consumer Survey for Ontario Parks, undertaken by COMPAS Inc., investigated a variety

of factors that might encourage Ontario residents to visit a Provincial Park. The survey indicated that the provision of accommodations and a convenience store were motivations among non-park users. It also indicated that the provision of cabins/shelters would motivate visitors to use parks more in the autumn, winter and spring.

Ontario Parks will consider the feasibility of alternative roofed accommodation (e.g. yurts, rustic cabins) in Kakabeka Falls, in the development zone within the vicinity of the Portage Group Camping Area and/or the Whispering Hills campground. The feasibility assessment will include consideration of the type, number and siting of structures, impacts on other recreational uses, profitability, water source, waste disposal, access, and maintenance (Figure 3).

9.3 Tourism Services

The North of Superior Travel Association (NOSTA) jointly operates a tourism information outlet with Ontario Parks in the Information Centre. It provides both residents and visitors with information about recreation opportunities, accommodation, and regional information. The development of other tourism operations such as alternative accommodation, food and beverage services, recreation equipment rental/sales and retail sales will be determined through business planning, in conjunction with the Zone and Park Marketing Plan.

9.4 Marketing

A Marketing Plan will be developed for Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park in accordance with established Ontario Parks policy. It will be reviewed annually and revised as required. Marketing activities will be consistent with the Zone and Provincial Marketing Plan. The objectives of the marketing plan are protection of the park values as well as:

- To capitalize on the park's natural and cultural features in order to provide visitors with a unique outdoor experience within the park goal and objectives;
- To optimize the local, regional, provincial, national, and international markets for the park;
- To encourage park visitation and the use of the park as a catalyst to stimulate the local and regional economy;
- To encourage park shoulder season use and visitation to low use areas of the park but in keeping with the park goal and objectives;

- To work cooperatively with local commercial establishments;
- To encourage visitors to enjoy the attractions of the surrounding area; and
- To work cooperatively with municipal, regional, and provincial marketing travel and tourism associations.
- To increase the park's market share of the region's Foreign Independent Traveler, package tours, bus tours and Great Lakes cruises.
- To increase awareness of Ontario Parks' seasonal day-use permits.
- To encourage use by non-park users.
- To maintain existing levels of park use by park visitors and to increase their scope of usage of the park.

9.5 Research

Ontario Parks' research and information needs relate directly to the Ministry of Natural Resources' mandate and the Provincial Parks' goal and objectives. Park-based research needs to address the wide range of environmental, social and economic factors necessary to administer an ecologically sustainable system of parks. It is also important that research activities address the demand for good quality outdoor recreation experiences and customer satisfaction.

Research information needs are diverse. They cover the full spectrum of geological, biological, ecological, cultural and social sciences.

Scientific research and monitoring by qualified groups and individuals which contributes to the knowledge, inventory and identification of natural and cultural features and to environmental and recreational management objectives will be encouraged where appropriate. Subjects of particular interest to Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park include archaeology, geomorphology (e.g. raised shorelines) and geology, as well as life science studies (e.g. plant communities and animal species).

All research programs must be compatible with the park's goal, objectives and zoning prescriptions. Research projects require prior approval and must be conducted in accordance with MNR policy concerning research in provincial parks. Research must also meet all other applicable provincial requirements. Park staff at the zone office will monitor these research programs. Any archaeological research will also require approval and monitoring by the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Should provincially or nationally significant features/resources

be found, the Management Plan may be amended to ensure that protection will be provided through appropriate zoning or revision of plan policies.

Park user surveys will address levels of satisfaction, needs assessment, demographics, spending patterns and user profiles.

10.0 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Development policies identify priorities for new development as well as redevelopment of existing facilities. Development is implemented through business and work program planning, based on priority and subject to the availability of funds, and in accordance with approved site and development plans that detail the location, type and extent of development permitted.

Ontario Parks will:

- Work in conjunction with the Ministry of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation to conduct archaeological site assessments in the area of the proposed development. Should sites be known or discovered to exist in an area, inventory of the site(s) will occur; and
- Undertake earth and life science inventories so that developmental impacts can be mitigated.

No development will take place in the Nature Reserve zones except for necessary signs and trails.

10.1 Access and Circulation

The construction of new roads, bridges and utility corridors for park purposes will be directed by approved implementation and site plans. Such projects will be permitted in the development zones only. Construction will be closely monitored.

The construction of new trails in the Natural Environment and Nature Reserve zones will be subject to approved site plans.

Ontario Parks will continue to monitor the structural integrity of the main access bridge over the Kaministiquia River. In the event that the bridge requires replacement or extensive repairs, and that the cost to repair or replace the bridge exceeds available financial resources, Ontario Parks will consider reconfiguration of access to and circulation within the park. The park entrance may be relocated to Lucken's Road on the west side of the park where a separate access control facility will be constructed. The existing access control will remain in place for

the east side parking and the day-use area. Internal circulation will be reviewed to determine any adjustments required to maintain safe traffic flow.

10.2 Campgrounds

Ontario Parks will continue to assess the viability of the Riverside and Ferns Edge campgrounds to determine if they should be closed or maintained. The requirement for additional capacity will be monitored on an ongoing basis. Development of additional sites will comply with Ontario Parks' standards, guidelines governing capital development, and be in accordance with approved site plans and Environmental Assessment Act requirements. Part of the ongoing assessment will determine the need for additional campsites in the Whispering Hills campground. Until such time as a detailed site analysis of the Whispering Hills campground is completed and funding is in place to develop it, improvements can be made to the facilities in the Ferns Edge and Riverside campgrounds, such as adding electrical hookups, shower facilities or upgrading the comfort station.

10.3 Comfort Stations

Ontario Parks will assess the viability of existing comfort stations. The comfort stations will be upgraded and/or replaced as required, in the most cost-effective manner.

10.4 Day-use Areas

Ontario Parks will continue to monitor the quality of the beach area. When required, appropriate upgrading will be undertaken to maintain the beach/picnic area to Ontario Parks' standards. Dogs are not permitted in this area. Beach area two will be closed and allowed to regenerate as a natural shoreline area.

The development of picnic shelters at the beach/picnic area and the picnic area near the Mountain Portage trail will be undertaken subject to site planning and business planning.

10.5 Trails

Adaptation/expansion of the Visitor Centre to serve as a chalet and trailhead facility to support cross-country skiing activity will proceed as funds permit.

This change will necessitate some modification to existing trails that will include a new trail linking the

existing trail system with the Information Centre, and realigning a section to avoid a steep hill. All trail development will be supported by a site inventory in accordance with a trail site plan. Figure 3 shows how the trail system might appear. The final layout will depend on site analysis.

The expansion of permitted uses to include mountain biking for the Beaver Meadows and River Terrace trails and horseback riding for the Poplar Point trail will be subject to trail/site inventories and in accordance with trail/site plans, which will include trial periods for impact assessment. Trail courtesy signage will be posted to minimize potential conflict between trail users. Ontario Parks will restrict access to the trails by mountain bikes during periods of wet weather and/or during the spring thaw to minimize potential compaction and erosion impacts. Ontario Parks will restrict access to the Poplar Point trail by horses to the spring/autumn. Ontario Parks will designate an authorized entry/exit point for horses.

10.6 Viewing Pods and Boardwalks

Ontario Parks will continue to monitor the stability of the bedrock on which the viewing pods and boardwalks are built. Any significant changes will result in upgrading and/or replacement.

10.7 Utilities

Ontario Parks will continue to assess the viability of the park's water, sewage, and electrical facilities. All upgrading and/or replacement will be undertaken in accordance with the Ontario Parks Operating Standards.

Existing utility corridors that pass through the park will continue to be a permitted non-conforming use and are required to remain in present locations. New utility corridors will not be permitted.

10.8 Recreation and Tourism Services

Ontario Parks will continue to operate in a business-like way. Park staff will monitor visitor needs and customer service. Any new or additional services, such as the development of alternative accommodation, will be implemented through the normal business and work planning processes. Analysis will include the review of impacts of new

services on the surrounding municipalities and businesses.

10.9 Interpretive Facilities

The combination of provincially significant features and the high visitation level requires that Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park provides a “seasonal activity” level of service. Ontario Parks will upgrade or expand the Visitor Centre as funding permits.

Adaptation / expansion of the Visitor Centre to serve as a chalet to support winter day-use will proceed as funds permit.

10.10 Park Maintenance and Operation

Ontario Parks will monitor the performance of the operations and maintenance facilities. This will include facilities such as the park office, the gatehouse, the warehouse and the water facility. Upgrading and/or replacement of these facilities will occur as funds permit or as required to ensure public and staff health and safety.

11.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

In the implementation of the approved park management plan, Ontario Parks may pursue opportunities for partnerships involving other agencies and groups. Park development, operations and resource stewardship will be contingent upon the availability of funding and unforeseeable changes in priority or policy. Funding may be derived from a variety of sources, including corporate sponsorships and donations. Implementation of the management plan and the operation of the park will meet the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act, Provincial Parks Act and other pertinent legislation.

Unless otherwise identified in this document, implementation priorities may be established in subsidiary operating and resource stewardship plans. Preparation of these plans will involve the appropriate level of public consultation. A list of implementation priorities follows.

11.1 Resource Stewardship

- Preparation of a Natural Heritage Education plan.

- Preparation of trail/site inventories and trail/site plans for mountain biking and horseback riding.
- If required/deemed necessary, the completion of an Environmental Study Report, to evaluate options for restorative capping of Kakabeka Falls.

11.2 Development

- Preparation of a development plan, within the context of an Environmental Study Report, to evaluate options for repair/replacement of the access bridge and/or reconfiguration of park access via Luckens Road.
- Preparation of a sign plan;
- Site inventory and plans for trailhead development and trail slope re-alignment; and
- Chalet and trailhead plan for the Visitor Centre.
- Preparation of an assessment of feasibility for alternative accommodation;

11.3 Operations/Administration

- Formalize the minimum flow agreement with Ontario Hydro Services Company;
- Preparation of a park marketing plan/strategy; and
- Annual review of the operating plan and the business plan.

11.4 Project Screening

The Environmental Assessment Act requires that all park management activities conform to approved legislation, policy, procedures, guidelines and standards, including provisions for public notice. The preparation of this Park Management Plan constitutes the principal public review opportunity for activities and projects. Exceptions to this are projects where further study is required, or where a decision has been deferred to a subsidiary plan.

Preparation of a concept plan for alternative accommodation requires the preparation of a separate project plan.

11.5 Social and Economic Impact Analysis

Ontario Parks will base approvals for operational projects, such as roofed accommodation, on analysis of a supporting business case. The analysis will address both costs and long term benefits for the park, as well as consideration of the socio-economic

impacts on the surrounding area, including the Village. Ontario Parks will make use of available economic models in analyzing business cases.

11.6 Plan Review and Amendment

The management plan for Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park may be reviewed to address changing issues or conditions. A mandatory review is to be held after 10 years. This may involve a reassessment of all or part of the plan, including classification, zoning, goal, objectives and all resource management, operations and development.

A variety of programs will provide essential information concerning the implementation of the management plan and the effectiveness of approved policies. Such mechanisms as the collection of user statistics, periodic user surveys, park management audits, ecological monitoring and user impact assessments will provide valuable information to ensure that policies remain current and relevant. Research findings and resource inventory work may aid in conducting plan reviews.

12.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation was a very important part of the Kakabeka Falls Provincial Park Management Plan review process. The three phases of the review consisted of:

➤ **Phase 1 Invitation to Participate/Background Information, Issues and Options June – September 1999**

This phase included distribution of more than 100 copies of the Background Information, Issues and Options tabloid to the mandatory contact list as well as to known stakeholders, posting the Environmental Bill of Rights electronic registry (EBR) proposal notice, and distribution to MNR Information Centres in Toronto and Peterborough.

A workshop was held at the park Information Centre in September 1999 for plan advisors, stakeholders and interested members of the public. This workshop was preceded by newspaper advertisements. Twelve people attended the workshop.

Fourteen written comments were received from individuals and groups including the Wildlands League, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority, the Thunder Bay Kayak and Canoe Club, and the Kakabeka Falls Jackrabbit Ski Club.

➤ **Phase 2 Preliminary Management Plan July – September 2000**

This phase included distribution of 115 copies of the Preliminary Park Management Plan to the mandatory contact list and to known stakeholders, as well as the EBR notices listed above.

A meeting was held for plan advisors at the park Information Centre in July 2000 to discuss the content of the Preliminary Plan.

Six written comments (one with 69 signatories) were received from individuals and groups including local equestrians, the Wildlands League, and the Peaceful Parks Coalition. The dominant themes in the comments are reflected in the content of this Park Management Plan. Concerns and suggestions that were raised by respondents are summarized below:

- Concerns were expressed regarding the small size of the park relative to the amount of development within the park (500 ha compared

to the recommended 2000 ha for Natural Environment parks). Suggestions included increasing the size of the park, removing/relocating/minimizing development within the park, and closing and rehabilitating impacted areas.

- Concerns were expressed regarding the relationship between the park and the economy of the Village of Kakabeka Falls. Suggestions included acknowledging the dependence of village businesses upon the park, through engaging municipal representatives in discussions regarding marketing and commercial initiatives, as well as relocating existing/potential commercial operations from the park to the village.
- Concerns were expressed on the subject of water flow over Kakabeka Falls and the long term management of the Kaministiquia River, in light of the planned divestment process by Ontario Hydro Services Company. It was suggested that Ontario Parks participate in the pending water management planning process for the river.
- Concerns were expressed about the inclusion of ecological and social considerations within the greater park ecosystem approach to park planning and management. It was suggested that Ontario Parks take into account ecological and social associations in addition to the economic benefits of recreation activities both within and around the park.
- Concerns were expressed regarding the pay and display meters in the east parking lot. Suggestions included removing the meters, and/or increasing promotion of the use by regular visitors to the park, of the Ontario Parks' seasonal pass.
- Concerns regarding permitted uses included the potential for expanded mountain bike access, the use of the road corridor by snowmachines, and the inclusion of horseback riding as a permitted use. It was suggested that both mountain bike and snowmachine access be prohibited. It was also suggested that horseback riding be permitted.
- **Phase 3 Approved Park Management Plan April – May 2001**

This is the public's final opportunity to review the approved Management Plan. For a period of forty-five (45) days, interested participants in the planning

program have a final opportunity to determine if their concerns have been considered and addressed and to initiate an appeal concerning the plan contents where appropriate.

Ontario Parks will retain on file reference copies of relevant background information, Terms of Reference, Preliminary Management Plan and the approved Park Management Plan.

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