

Ship Harbour Long Lake Candidate Wilderness Area

Newsletter #3 — April 2009

Designation Proposal

Overview

In December 2007, the Province announced its intent to establish a new wilderness area on Crown lands in the vicinity of Ship Harbour Long Lake, in Halifax County. The initial discussion boundary included nearly 14,200 hectares (35,100 acres). Since that time, Nova Scotia Environment has been speaking with stakeholders and others to ensure that the final proposed boundary takes into account the full range of interests in this area.

In the first newsletter last April, we invited you to share your knowledge and concerns, and the second newsletter in September summarized that feedback. In February 2009, we released a discussion paper on the socioeconomic effects of designating three new wilderness areas, including Ship Harbour Long Lake Candidate Wilderness Area.

In this third newsletter, we outline the designation proposal and revised boundary for Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area.

Tell Us What You Think

We are now inviting public comment on the intent to designate Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area under the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*. The goal is to complete this consultation and legally protect the area during the summer of 2009.

Help us meet this goal by providing your comments.

You can view maps and other materials, and meet with staff at two public open houses:

May 20, 2009 at St. Philip Neri Roman Catholic Church hall, Musquodoboit Harbour, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

May 27, 2009 at the Fairbanks Centre, Dartmouth, 3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

You can also visit displays at the Musquodoboit Harbour and Alderney Gate Public Libraries, May 11 - June 5.

You can submit comments in person at the open houses, or by visiting the web site, writing in, or calling Protected Areas Branch by **June 19th, 2009**.



Photo: Irwin Barrett

Consultation Process

STEP 1 - Information Sharing/Issue Identification

goal: collect information, finalize the consultation process, and identify outstanding issues

plan: *newsletter #1*, stakeholder meetings; public information forums, socio-economic analysis

Public Reporting

goal: summarize input from Step 1

plan: *newsletter #2*

STEP 2 - Issue Resolution

goal: solve issues with affected individuals and stakeholders

plan: joint meetings and workshops

→ STEP 3 - Designation Proposal

goal: public input on final proposed wilderness area boundary & socio-economic analysis

plan: *newsletter #3*, 60 day consultation with regional displays, write-in opportunities, and public open houses

Public Reporting

goal: summarize input from step 3

plan: *newsletter #4*

STEP 4 - Final Government Decision

goal: announce final designation

plan: news release & direct participant notification
complete legal surveys and documents



Ship Harbour Long Lake Revised Candidate Wilderness Area



- Ship Harbour Long Lake Candidate Wilderness Area
- Area added to candidate wilderness area
- Area added to candidate wilderness area (partial harvest 2009)
- Area removed from original candidate wilderness area boundary
- Wilderness Areas
- Crown land
- Private Land



Map produced by NSE, March 2009.
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/protectedareas>

This product may contain portions of the following databases or information derived from the following databases: NSTDB and NS Atlas Database, 2001. Obtained from SNSMR, Nova Scotia Geomatics Centre.

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Improving the Boundary

The last newsletter summarized over 200 public comments from Step 1 in the process. During Step 2, this input helped guide and influence stakeholder meetings and analysis, and even led to independent meetings between some stakeholders.

Nova Scotia Environment then carried out a detailed analysis of suggested boundary changes. From this assessment, the revised boundary for the proposed wilderness area was developed jointly with the Department of Natural Resources.

The goal is to establish the best possible boundary that meets government's initial commitment, while considering the ecology and management of the area and competing land use demands.



What Was Requested

Through the consultation process, close to 3,000 hectares of adjacent Crown lands were suggested as additions to the candidate wilderness area. In general, people felt these additions would improve ecological and habitat protection, ease enforcement, and protect natural corridors for wildlife movement and wilderness recreation.

Requests were also made to exclude over 1,000 hectares of the original candidate area. Most of these suggestions reflected mineral and mining interests. Some additional adjustments were also suggested for motor vehicle access and wood supply commitments.

Designation Proposal

The map on the facing page highlights changes made in developing the revised boundary proposal for Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area. This revised boundary includes 887 hectares of Crown land additions and 326 hectares of exclusions, for a total area of 14,750 hectares.

Additions

(1) Reid Hill — this area features an uncommon hardwood-hill within this landscape. Including this area helps our goal of protecting representative examples of our landscape diversity. Higgins Mine Road has been excluded from the boundary.

(2) Murchyville Road — a number of areas were added along Murchyville Road to align the boundary to the road edge. This change was made to improve management, enforcement, and stewardship of the wilderness area.

(3) Fish River — some lands were added to enhance protection of Fish River.

(4) Ship Harbour Long Lake — An area at the northwestern end of the lake was added and a smaller area removed. These changes will better protect the lake, while simplifying boundary lines and management.

(5) Portapique Lake — additional lands next to Portapique Lake have been added to better protect the lake and to include ecosystem types that are otherwise poorly represented within the boundary.

(6) Fishing Lake — the area between Lays Lake Road and the private land around Fishing Lake has been included to protect ecosystem types which are otherwise poorly protected within the boundary.

(7) Lays Lake Road — further area was added to bring the wilderness area boundary to the edge of Lays Lake Road. This addition improves management, enforcement, and stewardship.

(8) Crown land inholdings — recently acquired Crown lands that were inholdings or directly adjacent to the candidate wilderness area have been added to the revised boundary.



Photo: Oliver Maass

Exclusions

(1) Touquoy Project — a 4 hectare area at the northern end of Scraggy Lake has been removed to exclude the entire mining licence issued for the Touquoy Gold Project at Moose River Gold Mines.

(2) Gold Lake — areas near Gold Lake have been excluded, primarily to accommodate significant mineral interests.

(3) Lake Charlotte (west) — a section of the original candidate area overlapping with long-held mineral interests has been excluded. This area also helps satisfy provincial wood supply commitments with Northern Pulp Ltd.

(4) Ogilvie Brook — a section of the original candidate wilderness area has been excluded to help satisfy provincial wood supply commitments with Northern Pulp Ltd. This also includes minor adjustments to simplify the boundary alignment in this area.

Adjustments

Adjustments have been made to the candidate wilderness area boundary to maintain primary access points at Scraggy Lake and the northern end of Ship Harbour Long Lake. Richardson Lake, which was originally omitted in error, has also been included in the revised wilderness area boundary, as have Crown islands on Admiral Lake and Fishing Lake.

Other Considerations

To help satisfy wood supply commitments to Northern Pulp Ltd. for 2009, a controlled partial harvest in sections of the proposed additions at Portapique Lake and Fishing Lake will be permitted prior to designation of the wilderness area.

Forest access roads that form important links within regional road and off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail systems have all been excluded from the boundary, including Murchyville and Lays Lake roads. Nova Scotia Environment is prepared to enter into a trail management agreement with OHV organizations for winter use of a route from Logging Lake to Smith Settlement. Side trails to interior areas will be closed to general public OHV use. Many of the large lakes that are frequently travelled by motorboat are outside of the candidate wilderness area.

Hunting and fishing interests were also given close consideration. Vehicle access to a number of popular fishing lakes has been maintained in the design of the wilderness area

boundary. The use of motorboats in wilderness areas for sport fishing is generally permitted. Though raised as a concern in the consultation, bear baiting is not permitted in wilderness areas. Most registered bear baiting sites are located outside the proposed wilderness area.

During the consultation, many Crown campsite lease holders questioned how the wilderness area would affect their activities. All existing Crown campsite lease holders within the wilderness area will be given the opportunity to convert their lease to a wilderness area campsite licence. Primary vehicle access routes to these leases are mostly outside the revised boundary, or may be licenced under provisions of the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act*.

Access to private land surrounded by the proposed wilderness area will be accommodated on a case-by-case basis.



Next Steps

Although significant consultation and analysis has gone into developing this designation proposal, we welcome input from the public and stakeholder groups.

All comments received during this final consultation will be considered in finalizing the designation of Ship Harbour Long Lake Wilderness Area.

Ideas and suggestions are always welcome on any aspect of the Protected Areas Program. For more information, please contact us or visit the Protected Areas website.

Newsletters and other information on Ship Harbour Long Lake Candidate

Wilderness Area available at:

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