



Ontario Fur Managers Federation

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April 19, 2024

Laura Bjorgan
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Ontario Parks - Protected Areas Section
300 Water St, 6th Flr S
Peterborough, ON K9J 3C7

Dear Ms. Bjorgan,

Re: ERO 019-7814 Developing a management plan for Bigwind Lake Provincial Park

On behalf of the Ontario Fur Managers Federation, we would like to express our opposition to the commercial trapping related portion of the proposed management plan for Bigwind Lake Provincial Park. The proposed plan would remove the areas within the park from the existing registered trapline (BR-06) and prohibit commercial trapping. The OFMF does not agree with this, and we believe that this decision will end up costing the park money in road maintenance and subsequent removal of nuisance beavers. We are requesting that you work with the current head trapper on BR-06 to ensure that they are still permitted to trap within the park boundaries. This will be especially important when it comes to beaver trapping. As mentioned above, if the park ceases beaver trapping there is a high probability that there will be road/trail washouts. When this happens, the park will have to rebuild those roads/trails and pay to have a trapper come in to remove those beavers anyways. The better solution would be to retain the current trapper on that portion of the park to ensure proper wildlife management is occurring.

It is important to note that commercial trapping occurs effectively and without issue in Ontario Parks every year. As per the 2021 State of Ontario's Natural Resources Indicator Report, commercial trapping was permitted in 292 of Ontario's 340 provincial parks. So, it is clear that trapping can easily and effectively take place within provincial parks. There is also very little overlap between trapping seasons and the busiest times for the park as the majority of trapping would only occur between October and April. Working with the trapper would easily allow for trapping to take place outside of the busiest times, even if winter activities were a feature of this park. Trapping beaver through the ice would be an extremely safe and non-visible activity, as the traps are fully submerged. Additionally, it is proposed that as part of the expansion of Bigwind Lake Provincial Park, hunting will be permitted to continue in 274 hectares of land being added to the park. There is no reason why trapping would be excluded when

hunting is maintained in that area, especially as there is an existing head trapper already trapping that area.

The OFMF is recommending that Ontario Parks restructures its section on commercial trapping in the park to ensure that the head trapper on BR-06 is still able to trap the portions of the park that fall within the existing boundary of the registered trapline. We also recommend that you work with the existing head trapper to address any concerns you may have, instead of removing their ability to trap. Continuing to allow commercial trapping to take place aligns with the park's desire to maintain traditional activities. We recommend this approach for all of Ontario's provincial parks to ensure the best possible wildlife management continues across the province.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lauren Tonelli', written in a cursive style.

Lauren Tonelli
General Manager

cc:
OFMF Executive Board