



French River

A Second Decade in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System
Ten Year Monitoring Report: 1999-2007



Ontario Parks
and
The Canadian
Heritage
Rivers System

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report focuses on the events that have occurred in the past ten years that are likely to influence the management of the French River as a Canadian Heritage River.

Some important events that occurred between 1997 and 1999 have already been addressed in the prior monitoring document (Coomber 1999). Thus some key items previously reported on have also been included in this report, as this is a “10 year” report. Several events that have or are likely to happen beyond 2007, such as new fishing regulations and the expansion of a major transportation corridor have also been included.

Over the last decade, French River Provincial Park and region have experienced important changes. Additions in 1997 (KIW) and 2007 (OLL) increased the park by over 43%. Additional representation and widening the park has significantly enhanced the ecological integrity of the site. The Georgian Bay Littoral Biosphere Reserve designated by UNESCO in 2005 brought attention to the ecological integrity of the area by recognizing the importance of the broader ecosystem in the aquatic context.

Park operations staffing (1990’s to present), trail improvements, a park map and the French River Visitor Centre enhanced visitors’ understanding of the areas natural and human importance. The French River Recreation Bridge improved snowmobile safety and provided visitors with access to a spectacular viewing platform. The change in status of the French River from non-operating to operating over a three year period (2005-2007) has resulted in an ability to quantify contact with overnight visitors, as well as improved, staffing and recreation management.

The French River Visitor Centre incorporates many facets of visitor education and relationship building between Ontario Parks, area residents and First Nations communities. Ongoing management of the park includes consultation with local committees such as the French River Joint Management Advisory Committee and the First Nations Aboriginal Advisory Committee.

Related management activities of the Ministry of Natural Resources that benefit the French River include invasive species awareness and monitoring, the regulation of enhanced management areas and updated fisheries regulations. The four-laning of the primary north-south transportation corridor is ongoing and will impact areas adjacent to the park.

Please refer to the chronology of events for a more comprehensive outline of relevant events.

FOREWORD

This report on the French River has been prepared by Ontario Parks for Ontario Parks and the CHRS Board as a requirement of the river's CHRS designation.

The report fulfills two objectives:

1. To permit the Canadian Heritage Rivers Board to review the present status of the French River as part of the CHRS
2. To provide a record for interested individuals and agencies of the changes that have occurred to the river over its second ten years in the system, 1997 – 2007 inclusive.

This report highlights the natural and cultural heritage values, recreational opportunities and integrity values which were the basis for nomination of the river to the CHRS in 1986. These values are within the boundaries of French River Provincial Park which comprises the "management area" of the designated river. The relationship between the park values, adjacent related features, and related internal and external management activities are also addressed in this document where appropriate.

The previous monitoring report (1999) recognized two changes within the CHRS since the French Rivers' designation that affect the assessment of the river's values:

1. More specific integrity values
2. National thematic framework

Please refer to the document "*A Canadian Heritage Rivers Monitoring System Ten Year Monitoring Report on the French River*, Nick Coomber Heritage Planning, 1999, for further details regarding the French River from years 1986-1998.

In this second decade, the CHRS has released two key documents concerning river values, *A Cultural Framework for Canadian Heritage Rivers* (CHRS 2000) and *A Framework for the Natural Values of Canadian Heritage Rivers* (CHRS 2001). The revised Frameworks are based on the experience gained over the trial period. The Cultural Heritage Values Framework retains most of the original content with the following changes:

- Acceptable element representations have been narrowed to include only those that are subject to traditional protected area planning and management. Values such as documents and offsite artifacts are now no longer acceptable representations, as they are not tangible and *in situ* within the immediate environment.
- Themes were redefined and subdivided, and in some cases removed if they were difficult to represent or were extremely rare.
- Activities representing modernity, of a ubiquitous nature or that cause environmental harm are no longer considered significant without some type of redeeming historical significance.

Within the Natural Values Framework, themes and the number of related sub-themes have remained unchanged, however much content and concept in both have been significantly modified. These amendments provide better definition of what is meant by a "Canadian Heritage River".

This monitoring report updates the original Nomination Values as described in the original nomination document and in the 1999 Coomber Report, bringing them in line with the new reporting frameworks.

The report is divided into eight sections, four of which are integral to the reporting framework. Nomination values to be reported on are discussed using original representation, current status, changes and/or threats and actions and related research. Preceding text complements the information contained within the tables. In sections, important events that may not necessarily be contained in the table are elaborated on. In some cases, information pre-dating 1997 was required to place the events of the past decade in proper context, which results in a longer text but permits a fuller understanding of recent events.

The organization of the document follows a conventional sense and format based on previous CHRS reports. It provides a broad perspective on the status of the French River while injecting relevant details. It attempts to bring the reader from their chair into the complex and inviting story of the French River, and hopes to present the rivers' past decade accurately and without bias.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In 1986, the French River was designated as a Canadian Heritage River, thus in 2007, it has been just over 20 years since this river, the first of the CHRS designations, has been in the system. From the rivers beginning, it has taken a role in nature and in people's lives of considerable importance. The French has been a river in the core of North America, etched in the Precambrian shield, surviving through glaciation, flowing in reversed direction for some time following the last continental glaciation and adjusting to its modern role. Early Aboriginal inhabitants depended on the river for transportation, sustenance and survival. Aboriginal culture and traditional knowledge were shaped by the river. These first people shared their knowledge with settlers and travellers. French explorers Champlain, Brulé and others, would further define themselves in these "new" lands, navigating the magnificent and maze-like channels. They were followed by Voyageurs and courier de bois travelling the River on their arduous journey's west and east in the name of Crown fur trade empires. Some settled, feeling the pull of the land and the economic potential. Cottagers who came longed for the tranquility and reprieve. Recreationists saw early the glory of the setting and challenge of the river, and entrepreneurs have made a living here, supporting patrons of one of the most popular, reachable and diversified semi-remote tourist destinations in Ontario.



Interpretive Plaque at Recollet Falls.
(Photo courtesy of MNR Staff).

It is these and other outstanding natural, cultural and recreational values that have made the French River such a spectacular and varied water body, recognized through its nomination and designation to the CHRS. Nominated in 1984, and designated in 1986 with the publishing of the French River Provincial Park Management Plan (1985), its' CHRS status was officially unveiled by federal and provincial government representatives in 1986 with a CHRS plaque located at the Highway 69 river crossing.

2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE FRENCH RIVER

French River Provincial Park was regulated in April 1989. A waterway class park in Ontario's provincial parks system, the park originally encompassed 51,150 hectares of land, along the 110 kilometres of river from Lake Nipissing to Georgian Bay (Map 1). including the French River Delta. A 1997 addition through Ontario's

"Keep It Wild" initiative resulted in a total protected area of 52,740 hectares.

In 2007, as a result of recommendations in *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* (OMNR 1999) the French River Additions were regulated as part of the French River Provincial Park. Grouped in two geographically distinct sections, the eastern section is located on Lake Nipissing and the upper French River. The western section is located along the lower French and Pickerel rivers, and includes areas adjacent to Georgian Bay. These additions were rationalized to enhance the protection of natural features and management of recreation opportunities in the original park

Other lands and waters in addition to the above mainland portion have been regulated to fulfill the direction in *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* (OLL), 20,790 hectares of the 22,405 hectares originally suggested (OMNR 1999). Some islands (1,651ha) within the original OLL area in Georgian Bay remain to be regulated. These islands were not included in regulation as there is a need to work with First Nations to resolve Aboriginal interests. Today, the park encompasses an area of 73,530 hectares.

Nine townships within the Municipality of French River, as well as farming and tourism centres, surround the park. Four First Nation communities, Dokis No. 9, French River No. 13, Henvey Inlet No. 2 and Point Grondine No. 3, abut the boundaries of the Park. Many other active first nations communities in the area have an ongoing interest and continue to use and affiliate with the French River.

2.1 CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

Table 1. Chronology of Events for the French River since 1999 ¹

| Year | Significant Events, Actions, Research or Studies since 1999 | In Park | Adjacent |
|----------------|---|---------|----------|
| Ongoing | Water flow monitoring by Environment Canada Water Services Canada since the early 1960's. Confirmed data is available until 12/31/05. Data beyond that is provisional. Only two monitoring stations remain active – Dry Pine Bay (regulated) and N. French R. near mouth (natural). | ✓ | |
| Ongoing | Increased awareness of Species at Risk, especially Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake through education and interpretation at French River Visitor Centre. | ✓ | |
| Ongoing | Budget allows for one seasonal part-time Conservation Officer to patrol the French River during shoulder seasons and into the winter. | ✓ | |
| Ongoing | French River Delta Association (FRDA) host annual French River clean-up. | ✓ | |
| 1989 - Ongoing | French River Joint Management Advisory Committee composed of resort owners, cottagers and local First Nations provide suggestions to Park Superintendent. Committee meets semi-annually. | ✓ | |
| 1990 - Ongoing | Land Claim and Statement of Claim from Wikwemikong First Nation includes islands in Georgian Bay, 1,615 ha of which will be indicated by OMNR to become part of the French River OLL addition in 1999. | ✓ | |
| 1992 - Ongoing | Friends of the French River Heritage Park (FFRHP) continue their support of and involvement with the French River. | | |
| 1993 | First full Management Plan Review – to address policy changes provincially. | ✓ | |
| 1997 | “Keep it Wild” initiative adds Stony Rapids, eastern Eighteen Mile Island and Five Finger Rapid areas (1,590 hectares) to the park for a total protected area of 52,740 hectares. | ✓ | |
| 1998 | Water Services Canada discontinues monitoring at Portage Dam, Chaudière Dam and French River at Lake Nipissing. | ✓ | |
| 1998 - Ongoing | Regulated water levels hover around the mean while unregulated water levels on Georgian Bay and Lake Huron fall sharply. In 2007, water levels remain below their long-term mean (NOAA 2007). | ✓ | |
| 1999 | Management Plan Minor Amendment: 99-01 – changes the nature reserve zone referred to as NR2: Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Habitat to NR2: French River Island Wildlife Habitat. | ✓ | |
| 1999 | “Ontario’s Living Legacy” (OLL) proposes to add P110 – French River Additions to increase park area by 22,405 hectares. | ✓ | |
| 1999 | Municipality of French River is formed - amalgamates nine townships including the settlements Alban, French River Station, Ouellette, and Monetville. | | ✓ |
| 1999 | Great Lakes Heritage Coast policy statement provides for special planning - incorporates land two kilometres inland from the shoreline of Georgian Bay, including the French River area (OMNR 1999). | ✓ | |
| 1999 | Enhanced Management Areas protect adjacent lands as per <i>Ontario’s Living Legacy Land Use Strategy</i> (1999). | | ✓ |
| 1999 | Land use change. Nipissing First Nation privately purchases culturally significant pre-archaic burial site on Frank’s Bay adjacent to park, and shares it in principle with Dokis First Nation and others. | | ✓ |
| 1999 | Prosecution by Fisheries and Oceans Canada for removal of beaver dam results in \$7,500 fine for locals. Fine monies support rehabilitating fish habitat | ✓ | |
| 1999 - 2001 | Elk are reintroduced east of Killarney and North of French River mouth to supplement existing population. Early and late winter surveys are flown annually (1999 – 2008). | ✓ | |
| 2000 | Meshaw Falls annual walleye egg harvesting and fish stocking program initiated in 1995 is cancelled due to negative implications for fishery. | ✓ | |

¹ This table would otherwise exclude events that occurred prior to 1997, but some relevant events are nonetheless included.

| Year | Significant Events, Actions, Research or Studies since 1999 | In Park | Adjacent |
|----------------|--|----------------|-----------------|
| 2000 | Stage II Archaeological Assessment prior to construction of French River Visitor Centre. No cultural heritage resources were identified. Prepared by Woodland Heritage Services Limited. | ✓ | |
| 2000 - 2002 | French River Visitor Centre funding approval, panning and consultation – including confirmation that no Species at Risk (SAR), specifically, Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake present at building site. | ✓ | |
| 2002 | Management Plan Minor Amendment: 02-01 – allows the Otter Bay snowmobile trail and bridge in natural environment zone NE2. | ✓ | |
| 2002 | Management Plan Minor Amendment: 2002-01 – provides for the rezoning of a 2ha portion of historical zone H3: Recollet Falls to allow for the expansion of development zone D1: Voyageur Lookout to accommodate the Visitor Centre's footprint. | ✓ | |
| 2002 | Management Plan Minor Amendment: 2002-02 – permits Pickerel River Bridge crossing just south of Hwy. 69 river crossing in Natural Environment zone NE2. | ✓ | |
| 2002 | Otter Bay Snowmobile Bridge and Trail constructed on Little French | ✓ | |
| 2002 | Woodland Heritage Services Limited compiles archaeological assessment of remainder of proposed building site. No cultural heritage resources identified. | ✓ | |
| 2002 | French River Visitor Centre Environmental Study Report. Prepared by Baird Sampson Neuert Architects Inc. | ✓ | |
| 2002 - 2004 | French River Provincial Park Recreation Bridge planning, consultation and construction phases. | ✓ | |
| 2002 - 2006 | French River Visitor Centre and exhibits under construction. | ✓ | |
| 2002 - Ongoing | First Nations Aboriginal Advisory Committee created to advise of First Nations involvement and ideas for Visitor Centre. | ✓ | |
| 2003 | Management Plan Major Amendment: 01-03 – allows the French River Recreation Bridge and snowmobile trail in development zone D1. | ✓ | |
| 2003 | French River Recreation Bridge - Environmental Study Report. Prepared by Great Lakes Environmental Services. | ✓ | |
| 2003 | Pickerel River Snowmobile Bridge installed. | ✓ | |
| 2003 - 2004 | Greater Georgian Bay Reptile Awareness Program educates the public and stakeholders about conservation needs of 11 reptile species in the Parry Sound – Muskoka Area. | | ✓ |
| 2004 | Sediment monitoring by Environment Canada's Water Survey Canada cancelled in 2003-2004. Sediment monitoring program had been in place since c.1960. | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2005 | Georgian Bay Littoral designated World Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO ² . The 347,000 hectare area includes extensive shoreline, open water and adjacent mainland. | | ✓ |
| 2004-2009 | 5-year logging plan abutting park boundary - considers area values ex. Park and other Areas of Concern. | | ✓ |
| 2005 | French River Recreation Bridge is installed following an Environmental Study Report and Management Plan amendment. | ✓ | |
| 2005 | French River Provincial Park becomes operational, begins 3-year phase-in; Park begins collecting fees and issuing park permits at nine lodges and resorts along the river. | ✓ | |
| 2005 | Joint Heritage River Canoe Trip - representatives from First Nations, OMNR and Ontario Parks paddle in traditional 24-foot North Canoe. Trip route: Dokis to Frank's Bay and return. | ✓ | |
| 2005 | Ontario Parks staffing increases on the French River and at the Visitor Centre | ✓ | |
| 2005 | Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves - legislation with implications to greater transparency of planning | ✓ | |

² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

| Year | Significant Events, Actions, Research or Studies since 1999 | In Park | Adjacent |
|----------------|--|---------|----------|
| 2005 - 2006 | Additional operating dollars enable field crews to rehabilitate campsites, install over 100 pit toilets, sign and GPS campsite locations; crews decommission 50 unsustainable campsites. | ✓ | |
| 2006 | French River Visitor Centre opens. Project totalled \$5.6M. The centre receives 50,000+ visitors annually and has been nominated for / won numerous awards. | ✓ | |
| 2006 | Technical Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Resources for projects planned under the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves is published. | ✓ | |
| 2006 | CBC "Studio 2" films short documentary about the French River | ✓ | |
| 2006 | Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council is established, stemming from the formation of the Georgian Bay / North Channel Stewardship Council in 2000. The area includes the Lower French River north to Allen Lake and east to Highway 69 (approximately) | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2006 | Expansion of Park Boundary, regulation beyond 200m boundary incorporates adjacent water bodies and adopts ecological boundaries. Deregulation of water located under provincial highways. | ✓ | |
| 2006 - 2007 | Local First Nations and Ontario Parks rehabilitate abandoned parking area adjacent to Visitor Centre | | ✓ |
| 2006 - Ongoing | Reptile [Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake] awareness at French River Visitor Centre | ✓ | |
| 2007 | French River Water Quality Stewardship Committee created. Ontario Parks not directly involved, however OMNR is the lead agency | ✓ | |
| 2007 | New Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act (2006) - maintain and increase Ecological Integrity is first priority. | ✓ | |
| 2007 | Management Plan Minor Amendment - adds policy direction for mainland portions of French River Park Additions total 73,530 hectares. Georgian Bay islands portion not included pending resolution of Aboriginal interests. | ✓ | |
| 2007 | Journey 2007 – Festival of Peoples co-hosted by the French River Visitor Centre First Nation and Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Ontario Parks, and MNR Parry Sound District. Over 1500 people attended a traditional First Nation Pow-Wow and Métis Rendezvous | ✓ | |
| 2007 | Tests done by the Ministry of the Environment confirm blue-green algae bloom. (cyanobacteria) Samples taken from 18 Mile Bay contained Anabaena, a species capable of producing toxins | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2008 | New Ontario fisheries regulations for 2008/09. French River regulations remain unchanged from 2007. See Recreational Fishing Regulations Summary for detail | ✓ | |
| 2008 | Intention to fully remove Recollet Falls Tramway | ✓ | |
| Ongoing - 2009 | Planning for highway 69 four-laning will add new bridges over French River (six crossings in total: two rail lines, four bridges) | ✓ | |

3.0 NATURAL HERITAGE VALUES

3.1 BACKGROUND

The French River nomination document (CHRS 1984) identifies the following key natural heritage features:

- Representation of Earth History:
 - Stratigraphy and structural features of the Grenville Province during ancient mountain building
 - Preglacial river erosional features some 40,000 years ago
 - Glacial ice moulding landscapes on the Canadian Shield including extensive delta on Georgian Bay



Narrow channel of the French River framed by steep granite walls. (Photo courtesy of MNR Staff).

- Representation of Ongoing Processes:
 - Post glacial plant and animal migration corridor using indicator species
 - Transitional Boreal and Great Lakes Forests with range extensions for flora from both regions
- Unique or Outstanding Biophysical Area:
 - 450 plant species documented; 40 are considered important to understanding vegetation community structures, 8 identified as provincially rare at the time of designation
 - Outstanding landform: Bedrock delta on Georgian Bay - habitat for an abundance in Ontario of Virginia Chain Fern; the largest most northerly roadless habitat for the threatened Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake; provincially significant productive Yellow Pickerel spawning and feeding areas
- And
 - Numerous areas of exceptional natural beauty, including narrow bedrock controlled channels where scenery changes with a variety of islands, rapids and falls. These include:
 - Bad River Voyageur Channel, Canoe Channel, Flat Rapids, Recollet Falls, Five Mile Rapids, Five Finger Rapids, Little French River, and Upper French River

3.2 CONDITION AND CHANGES SINCE LAST REPORT

Non-Native Species

Viral Hemorrhagic Septicaemia³ (VHS), documented for the first time in Lake Ontario in 2005, has been confirmed as far north as Lake Huron (OFAH, Undated). However, the definition of virus-positive waters includes adjoining water bodies – lakes Ontario, Erie and Huron (including Georgian Bay) and connecting waterways and tributaries up to the first impassable barrier, excluding fishways. This includes the Lower French River east to Highway 69 and the Key and Pickerel Rivers up to the first impassable barriers (OMNR 2007a). Key management strategies dictate that fish, bait, clothing and equipment from the management area cannot be moved outside the virus-positive waters, but like items from outside virus-positive waters can be used within the management area (OMNR 2007a).

Rhodophyta (*Bangia atropurpurea*) has been confirmed in the Great Lakes, but has not yet been confirmed in the French River. This type of algae was found at 43 sites in 1995 and 39 sites in 2002. In 2002, rhodophyta was confirmed for the first time on Georgian Bay, as well as in the St. Lawrence River and Lake Simcoe, indicating that this species is spreading (Shea et al. 2003).

The plant species purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) has been confirmed in Lake Nipissing and in the Lower French River area (OFAH 2008a).

The fish species round goby (*Neogobius melanostomus*) has not been confirmed on the French River, but has been documented along the North Shore of Georgian Bay (OFAH 2008b).

Spiny water flea (*Bythotrephes cederstroemi*) has been reported in Lake Nipissing and north of the French River along the shores of Georgian Bay (OFAH 2008c). The spiny water flea is likely in the river as well, since all water from Lake Nipissing must flow through the French River to Georgian Bay.

Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) have been observed and confirmed by the OFAH at the mouth of the French River and in water bodies south of L. Nipissing (OFAH 2008d). Anecdotally, it is well known that zebra mussels have invaded the French River. Interestingly, scientists have also found a link between zebra mussels and the occurrence of toxic blue-green algal blooms, or microcystis. Zebra mussels will spit microcystis into the water while at the same time, eat other algae that may be competitors with or help control microcystis. Zebra mussels also produce nutrients that further fertilize microcystis. (OFAH 2008d).

Water Quality

The water in the river has tested "good" for many years (UFRCA 2004). Since 1993, the Upper French River Cottagers Association (UFRCA) has engaged in water testing. Until 2004, this included semi-annual testing for *E.coli* (*Escherichia coli*), total phosphate, dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll A, nitrate and nitrite. The program cost \$900 per year and results had a

³ VHS is an infectious viral disease of fish, which results in early mortality.

slow turn around time. In 2005 a new, faster water-testing program was developed between the UFRCA, Near North Laboratories and FRI Ecological Services that tested for more representative and functional variables: *E.coli*, Coliform, water temperature, dissolved oxygen, phosphorous and water clarity observations. Since, the testing has been done monthly from May to October. The UFRCA obtained a one-time grant of \$3200 from TD Friends of the Environment to help cover the capital cost of the new program. The results of the testing are posted as samples are completed, and are shared with the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and Dokis First Nation (UFRCA 2004).

Tests conducted by the MOE confirmed the presence Blue Green Algae Blue-green algae (Cyanobacteria) from Wolesley Bay to Dry Pine Bay in the fall of 2007. The samples collected from 18 Mile Bay contained the species *Anabaena*, which is capable of producing toxins. The presence of toxins was not confirmed in the river, however while the algae was in bloom the Sudbury District Health Unit suggested taking precautions (Northern Life 2007). It is not known whether this is the first case of Cyanobacteria or the first reported case on the French River.

Elk Rehabilitation

Elk or Wapiti (*Cervus elaphus*) were once native to Ontario, along with moose (*Alces alces*), caribou (*Rangifer tarandus*) and deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). By the late 1800's, the elk population in North America had been reduced from pre-European settlement numbers of 10,000,000, to 100,000. Due to unregulated sport hunting, market hunting and loss of habitat due to human settlement, they were entirely extirpated from Ontario

During the early 1940's an attempt to restore the population was made, specifically in the Burwash area. However by the mid 1940's, there were fears that elk were acting as vectors for a parasite (called the giant liver fluke) with the potential for infecting domestic cattle. This assumption resulted in a deliberate attempt to extirpate elk from the province.

Efforts at extermination had only partial success and with the completion of a study by Bruce Ranta in 1979, it was accepted that the attempt to eliminate elk had not been warranted. By this time only a small remnant population of elk from the Burwash - French River area had survived

In 1993, Dr. Josef Hamr of Cambrian College, began to study the herd to determine its status and try to find out why elk numbers were not increasing. Use of radio-telemetry collars showed that there were two herds each in good condition and with good reproductive rates. The problem appeared to be that the elk population was too small to counteract periodic mortalities from drowning, and train collisions. In 1996 the OMNR entered into a partnership to restore elk. The Provincial Elk Restoration Advisory Committee (PERAC) was established to coordinate the effort.



Elk, once naturally occurring in healthy herds, were extirpated from the Ontario in the 1800's. They have since been introduced with success especially in the French River – Burwash area. (Photo courtesy of MNR Staff).

In 1998 a shipment of 47 elk arrived in Sudbury from Alberta. They were held over winter and then released. Their post-release movements were followed using radio telemetry in order to assess habitat use, mortality events and to monitor reproduction.

To date, 460 elk have been brought into Ontario, 187 of which have been released in the Nipissing -French River area. Aerial surveys are flown in early and late winter in order to assess calf recruitment and survival in the French River and Burwash areas. The 2007 early winter survey showed an increase in the known number of cows and calves (M. Hall. pers. comm. April 2008).

French River Fisheries

The French River walleye (*Stizostedion vitreum*) stocks have received significant funds in the past to perform various annual population assessments, such as creel surveys, angler interviews, netting surveys and walleye samples. The FWIN (Fall Walleye Index Netting) population assessment method was used from 1993 onward with the initiation of the French River Recovery Plan (1992). A partnership between the OMNR and Laurentian Universities' French River Cooperative Fisheries Unit (FRCFU) allowed the completion of these annual studies again from 2000-2003. Future assessment work will start with a proposed FWIN in 2009 (K. Scott. pers. comm. 3 April, 2007.).

Prior to 1980, the French River walleye stocks were some of the largest and most productive walleye stocks known in Ontario. Fishing pressure increased drastically throughout the 70's and 80's and stocks declined to record levels. The decline posed a serious threat to the sustainability of the fishery and the population. This resulted in the formation of the

French River Community Fisheries Enhancement Committee (FRCFEC) to address the issue. The committee consisted of representatives from OMNR, the Ministry of Culture Tourism and Recreation, Environment Canada, Dokis First Nation, OFAH, Ontario Hydro, Laurentian University and local stakeholders.

Measures were taken to assess the stock and habitat. The FRCFEC advised and supported an OMNR decision to restrict walleye slots to between 38 and 64 centimetres, protecting the breeding fish and significantly limiting the allowable harvest. The consequent success of the decision - improved population and fish sizes - supported the restrictions.

Between 1995 and 2000 the Community Fisheries and Wildlife Involvement Program (CFWIP) Meshaw Falls Eggs collection and spawning assessment was active on the Central French, effectively live trapping and harvesting eggs from all spawning walleye. The stress induced by the netting combined with the removal of potential fry caused greater damage to the stock than benefits. This was compounded by degraded spawning habitat from road siltation. Though CFWIP stocked walleye annually, the fish were not of the same genetic strain and thus competed with endemic strains, or were not as fit. Eggs that were harvested from French River walleye were hatched but often stocked in other area lakes (K. Scott, pers. comm. 29 January, 2008).

In 2000 the walleye population in the Eastern and Western French, traditionally both productive walleye habitat, had increased 160% and 32% from 1993 levels, respectively. The Central French River, which is not considered to be prime walleye habitat, had experienced a 45% decrease and appeared to be collapsing (Harrow and Morgan, 2000).

Aware of the disparity and receiving public concerns, the OMNR contracted an engineering firm to rehabilitate this portion of the riverbed and suspended the Egg Collection and Spawning Assessment program. With even greater recoveries than observed in the walleye population, the CFWIP hatchery building was permanently relinquished to private owners in 2003 (Heerschap 2003). Since, walleye populations on the French have recovered so successfully, and already with some pressure from local fishers, the OMNR may consider relaxing the slot size from 38 centimetres to 42 centimetres in 2010 (K. Scott, pers. comm. 29 January, 2008).



Recreational anglers employ fishing guides through commercial lodges and resorts. (Photo courtesy of MNR Staff).

Next steps of the Recovery Plan have been discussed at a public meeting in 2005. The French River Community Fisheries Enhancement Committee persists, however it is not as active as it once was due to the success already seen. This is the best example in the province of Ontario of a threatened fishery and a collapsed populations' recovery. Anglers, lodge owners and OMNR personnel are extremely happy with the outcome. Although stocks in the central French remain status quo, the fishery in the Eastern and Western French has improved dramatically to pre-collapse levels (Harrow and Morgan, 2000). The French River Recovery Plan continues to be funded by OMNR.

Climate change and warming water trends are likely to be the cause of an increase in large (*Micropterus salmoides*) and small mouth bass (*M. dolomieu*) populations. These species compete with endemic populations, such as walleye, for resources. It has been suggested that, an increase in catch limit or an adjustment of slot sizes for greater harvest may be appropriate for bass on the French River in the future (K. Scott, pers. comm. 29 January, 2008).

Northern pike (*Esox lucius*) populations are experiencing a decline, as noted from anecdotal reports and from creel surveys. Although the scientific research usually focuses on walleye populations, this observation suggests that more attention will be paid and an adjustment to restrict the northern pike fishery may be considered in future regulations.

The French River Fisheries Study (1992-1998) found that Muskellunge (*Esox masquinongy*) are considered a fragile resource as the top predator in their ecosystem, and that size limits less than 122 centimetres would not sustain the population. As the public supports a trophy fishery on the French River, the more restrictive slot length remains at 122 centimetres in 2008.

Managers of the contiguous Pickerel River, located in Parry Sound District, attempted to harmonize fishing regulations between the two rivers by adopting the more restrictive 1998 French River slot sizes and limits. The French River fish stocks can easily travel between the two jurisdictions, supporting the need for identical regulations. In 2005, however, it was

confirmed that despite efforts, local protest was so adamant that rather than continue pushing for identical regulations, Parry Sound District would concede to identical catch limits for bass, pike and walleye, and same catch and size limits for Muskellunge. With the new Ecological Framework for Recreational Fisheries Management (OMNR 2005e), standardized regulations for the Pickerel River have been implemented, though harmonization with the French is not intended to be pursued at this time (E. McIntyre. pers. comm. 13 June, 2005).

Reptiles

Between 2002-2006, the federally funded Canadian Wildlife Stewardship Program project, the “Greater Georgian Bay Reptile Awareness Program” was dedicated to public education, strong landowner involvement, and stewardship. The program recognized development and visitation pressures in the Georgian Bay area, the likelihood of increased human-reptile conflict and the potential loss of important habitat. The project educated members of the public about the natural history, distribution, status, and conservation needs of 11 reptile species, including the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake. Workshops and educational materials were offered. Direct landowner contact, response to inquiries and extensive media coverage was promoted. In each year since the Canadian Wildlife Stewardship Program supplied funding (beginning 2001), the and its habitat have received funding for related projects, though not necessarily in the Georgian Bay or French River area (CWS 2007).



Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake, *Sistrurus catenatus* (Photo courtesy of MNR Staff).

Other

July 17, 2006 Windstorm

On July 17, 2006, an extremely destructive windstorm passed through the Georgian Bay area. The French River region was one of the hardest hit areas. From Chaudière Lodge to Sandy Island, vast numbers of trees, mostly pine, were felled by the strong winds. Damage to property has not been estimated, though anecdotally the damage was significant. Salvage operations in the Nipissing Forest to harvest the blow down were planned for these areas in addition to what had been approved in the 2004-09 Forest Management Plan (UFRCA 2006). The harvest operation did not include any areas within the Park.

French River Water Quality Stewardship Committee

Formed in February of 2007 and with an executive committee composed of representatives from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Sudbury District Health Unit, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, and a cross-section of local citizens, the committee engages individuals interested in maintaining or increasing the water quality of the French River. With membership at large approximated at over 100, the committee holds an annual public meeting focusing on river water quality. The committee has pursued involvement with Ontario Parks and local First Nations communities, which are both involved though not formally represented on the committee. Projects undertaken include phosphorus sampling and monitoring of indicator species such as crayfish and amphibian populations (Palmer, M. Pers. Comm. 10 April, 2008).

Forest Management Plan Review

The Current Forest Management Plan (FMP) for the French River area is prescribed from 1999-2009. From 2007 to 2009, plans are made for the next 10-year management plan 2009-2019 (UFRCA 2007).

Water Levels

Water Levels in the Great Lakes are of concern at this time. Between 1965-1997, water levels were generally above their long-term mean, however in 1998 lake levels fell sharply. Lakes Superior, Michigan and Huron, including Georgian Bay, remain well below their long-term means and are continuing to drop. Lakes Ontario, St. Clair and Erie are once again above long term means. Variations in weather patterns may play a role, the low level lakes having experienced unusual drought conditions in past years (NOAA 2007). The French River is a regulated waterway, and thus water levels remain predictable despite the drop in Georgian Bay.

Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council

Established in 2006 under the OMNR's Stewardship Network, the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council (EGBSC) is primarily water-based and fisheries oriented. Their mandate includes a land and water component, as well as a strong fisheries component. The council originates from the Georgian Bay / North Channel Fisheries Stewardship Council created in 2000. With the introduction of new sport fishing regulations in 2003, the council shifted its focus from regulatory advisory to the co-management and stewardship council that is active today. The EGBSC area of authority includes, approximately, the Lower French River north to Allen Lake and east to Highway 69 (EGBSC 2006).

Georgian Bay Littoral Biosphere Reserve

The 13th Biosphere Reserve in Canada and the 4th in Ontario, the Georgian Bay Littoral was designated as a World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on November 5, 2005. It covers 347,000 hectares and includes extensive shoreline, open waters and adjacent mainland. The reserve also encourages sustainable economic and human development focusing on 'smart-growth' ecotourism. It promotes environmental education, research and monitoring of activities (GBLT 2008).

Cormorant Management

In the Lake Huron Area, approximately 98 of 108 active double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) nesting colonies are found on the Ontario side of Lake Huron. The majority of these are located in Georgian Bay and the North Channel. This population increased drastically since the late 1980's. Growing 60% between 1997 and 2001, the population peaked in 2000-2001. Since, the population has decreased by over 20%, though the negative association between cormorants and depleted fisheries is still strong (OMNR 2006). One study aimed to determine the scale of the cormorant population in the area relative to the fish. An element of this study included reducing the population by oiling eggs and attempting to determine the interrelationship between predator and prey (Ridgeway et al. 2006).

As per the document *Review of the Population Status and Management of Double-crested Cormorants in Ontario* (OMNR 2006) cormorant control will only be considered in "specific local areas if the birds are found to be having significant negative, ecological impacts on habitats or other species". Two recent guiding policy documents *Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy* (OMNR 2005c) and *Our Sustainable Future* (OMNR 2005d) emphasize the conservation of natural resources and maintaining biodiversity while protecting human and health and economic growth (OMNR 2006). There has been no lethal cormorant management taken within the park. Park management documents will help guide the management of any excessive population.

Table 2. Natural Heritage Values of the French River⁴

| Theme / Sub-theme / Element | Theme Representation in 1986 | Changes since 1999 and Threats to Condition | Actions and Related Research |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| 1.0 Hydrology | | | |
| 1.1.5 Drainage Basin | Atlantic Ocean Basin - St. Lawrence River System drainage basin. French R. is a lake-influenced system, includes Lake Nipissing, Wolesley Bay, Eighteen Mile Bay as main influences. | Viral Hemorrhagic Septicaemia (VHS) has been introduced in the Great Lakes. | Management Programs are in place to help stop the spread. VHS has not yet reached Georgian Bay or the French River, though they are part of the management area. 2005 designation of the Georgian Bay Littoral Biosphere Reserve. |


⁴ As the intention of the reporting framework has been significantly revised since the last report, some features will have been recorded under their new elements. Where an element did not exist previously it has been noted.

| Theme / Sub-theme / Element | Theme Representation in 1986 | Changes since 1999 and Threats to Condition | Actions and Related Research |
|---|---|--|---|
| 1.2.3 Seasonal Variation | Temperate spring peak - May. Entire River. Dams and Pickerel River help to prevent major fluctuations in water levels. | Water levels in the Great Lakes are approaching an all-time low. Water control structures combat this effect on the French River. Possibly due to climate change, freeze-up may be later and break-up may be earlier. Anecdotal evidence to support. | Numerous organizations are attempting to determine the cause of the water loss, though studies continue to contradict the findings of others. |
| 1.3.1 Water Content (Upper French) | Insignificant sediment load (phys); low total dissolved solids (chem) | Last record of sediment in 1997 recorded one measurement (May) dissolved solids of 83 mg/L at French River near the Mouth | Sediment monitoring program by WSC cancelled in 2003. Water Quality measurements made by UFRCA and Near North Laboratories states water quality is good |
| 1.3.2 Water Content (Lower French) | Minor sediment load (phys); low total dissolved solids (chem) | Last record of sediment in 2000 recorded average. July/August dissolved solids of 1106 mg/L at Dry Pine Bay. Noëlville Lagoons are drained into river at high water levels | Sediment monitoring program by WSC cancelled in 2003. Noëlville Lagoons managed by Ontario Clean Water Agency and tested prior to draining. Lagoons currently operate at 35% capacity. |
| 1.4 River Size | Small River. Mean annual flow of 51-91 m ³ /s. Stream Order 2. River increases by 30% below Pickerel River junction. | Mean annual flow at Mouth of 96.5 m ³ /s, min = 70.1; max = 126 (1986 - 2007) Mean annual flow at Dry Pine Bay of 182 m ³ /s, min = 97; max = 232 (1986 - 2006) | Only two monitoring stations remain active - Dry Pine Bay (regulated) and North French near the mouth (natural) |
| 2.0 Physiography | | | |
| 2.2.5 Geological Processes: Bedrock Formation | Sedimentation. Gneisses, slates, schists, rhyolites of the Grenville Province Part of the Canadian Shield - Laurentian Region. | None. | French River Visitor Centre exhibits |

| Theme / Sub-theme / Element | | Theme Representation in 1986 | Changes since 1999 and Threats to Condition | Actions and Related Research |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| 2.2.9 | Geological Processes: Surficial Material Formation | <p>Glacial Scouring and 'P' forms. Striations, polishing, grooves, kettles.</p> <p>Scarps within the park on north side of Fourteen Mile Island.</p> <p>Plutons on Burnt Island, Pine Cove, Emma Lake, French River Gorge</p> <p>Oversize channels, potholes, spillways, glacial lake deposits.</p> <p>Potholes at Meshaw Falls below Portage Dam, and other locations. Glacial Rebound. Reversal of flow of pro-glacial Lake Algonquin.</p> <p>Ice-moulded shorelines, striations, grooves near Rainbow Camp Boat Tramway, French R. delta</p> | None. | French River Visitor Centre exhibits |
| 2.2.6 | Glacial melting | | | French River Visitor Centre exhibits |
| 2.3.4 | Hydrology | | | <p>Bedrock Type: Impervious (Igneous and Metamorphic) of Grenville Province throughout corridor.</p> <p>Surficial Unconsolidated Materials: High Porosity. Thin Soils and Barrens.</p> |
| 2.4.4 | Topography | <p>Steep Gradient >5m/km</p> <p>Height Above Sea Level: 0-400m.</p> <p>Shallow gradient, middle section - stepped.</p> | None. | French River Visitor Centre exhibits |
| 3.0 River Morphology | | | | |
| 3.2.1 | Channel Patterns Straight Channels | <p>Almost straight channels, often with angular bends and bedrock.</p> <p>Classic features of pre-glacial river erosion - bedrock 'delta', Main Channel.</p> <p>Narrow bedrock controlled channels on main channel below Highway 69 bridge.</p> | None. | |

| Theme / Sub-theme / Element | | Theme Representation in 1986 | Changes since 1999 and Threats to Condition | Actions and Related Research |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|--|
| 3.2.5 | Branching Streams | Channels separated by significant land masses, including vegetated bars. Includes river distributaries, including those in deltas. | None. | |
| 3.2.11 | Elongated Lakes | River section is essentially an elongated lake, possibly a drowned channel, flowing only at outlets. | None. | |
| 3.3.7 | Channel Profile Whirlpool | Major eddy or vortex with backflow, associated with deeps and channel bends. Stony Rapids, Five Finger Rapids, Five Mile Rapids, Flat Rapids, Jameson Rapids, Bad River Rapids. | None. | |
| 3.3.9 | Ledge Type Waterfalls | Abrupt, level drop extending across river channel, ex. Recollet Falls, Dallas Rapids | None. | |
| 4.0 Biotic Environments | | | | |
| 4.1.2 | Lake Systems | Mesotrophic Lakes, such as Sturgeon Lakes, Island Lake, Bear Lake | | |
| 4.1.10 | Aquatic Ecosystems | Bogs and Fens: Numerous examples throughout the river Swamps: Numerous examples in geological depressions | | |
| 4.2.9 | Terrestrial Ecosystems | Located in Ecodistrict/s 5E-7 and 5E-5 ⁵ Boreal Shield Ecozone | Logging is occurring in the area but is not permitted within Park boundaries. | Park additions include Natural Areas: 1) French River to Key River 2) Travers Township and Voyageur Channel 3) Struthers Township Upland Forest. Forest Management Plan for 2009-2019 will be reviewed in 2007/08. Current forest management plan will harvest several areas near park boundary. |

⁵ Ontario is divided into 13 ecoregions. An ecoregion is an area of land within which the response of vegetation to the features of landform follows a consistent pattern. Ecoregion 5E is called Georgian Bay. Ontario is divided into 65 ecodistricts. An ecodistrict is a subdivision of an ecoregion based on a characteristic pattern of physiographic features, which set apart fairly large areas from one another (OMNR 2004).

| Theme / Sub-theme / Element | Theme Representation in 1986 | Changes since 1999 and Threats to Condition | Actions and Related Research |
|---|--|---|--|
| | | Narrow river corridor concentrates recreational pressure | Campsites are located so as to distribute camping pressure along the narrow corridors. |
| 5.0 Vegetation | | | |
| 5.1.5 Significant Plant 5.1.6 Communities. Extent and Location |  <p>Virginia chain fern, <i>Woodwardia virginica</i>. (Photo courtesy of MNR Staff).</p> | <p>Virginia chain fern (<i>Woodwardia virginica</i>) - largest community in Canada at river mouth. 5 provincially rare flora: Blunt-lobed Grapefern (<i>Botrychium oneidense</i>), mat panic grass (<i>Panicum meridionale</i>), secund rush (<i>Juncus secundus</i>), Giant pinedrops (<i>Pterospora andromedea</i>) and scentless chamomile⁶ (<i>Matricaria maritima ssp. phaeocephala</i>). Distributed in small pockets throughout corridor.</p> | <p>Clustered sedge (<i>Carex cumulata</i>) Canada's St. John's wort (<i>Hypericum canadense</i>), Farwell's water milfoil (<i>Myriophyllum farwellii</i>) are not currently considered provincially rare. They are rated S4 and are listed in a larger database.</p> |
| 5.1.7 Vascular Plants - Dynamic | Post glacial migration corridor for vascular plants | None. | |
| 5.2.4 Rare Plant Species | <p>Provincially rare: Blunt-lobed Grapefern Secund rush Giant pinedrops</p> <p>For a [more] complete listing of rare plants found in these ecodistricts (5E and 5E-7, refer to Crins 2004.</p> | | <p>Report: Provincially and Regionally Rare Vascular Plants - Ecoregion 5E. -W.B. Crins 2004.</p> <p>Report: Locally Rare Vascular Plants - Site District 5E-7. -W.B. Crins 2004.</p> |
| 6.0 Fauna | | | |
| 6.1 Significant Animal Populations | | | |
| 6.1.1 Exceptional population size - Fish | <p>Yellow pickerel, provincially significant spawning and feeding areas. Largest populations are in the lower river and the 'delta' area.</p> | <p>Historic decline in population due to over fishing has been reversed due to significant rehabilitation efforts by government, public, private and educational institutions and groups.</p> | <p>The egg harvest and spawning program has been cancelled. FWIN method population assessment approximately every 5 years by the OMNR in conjunction with Laurentian University's FRCFU.</p> |

⁶ *M. maritima ssp. Phaeocephala* is a native subspecies, not to be confused with the invasive subspecies *M. perforata*.

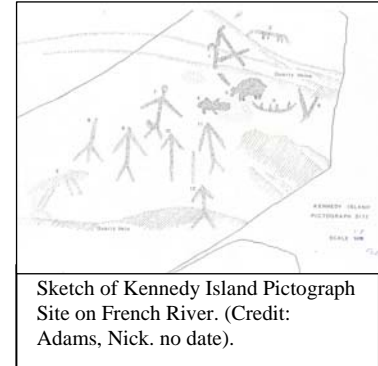
| Theme / Sub-theme / Element | | Theme Representation in 1986 | Changes since 1999 and Threats to Condition | Actions and Related Research |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 6.1.6 | Exceptional location - Mammals | Elk (Wapiti) - includes range area of the only naturalized population in Ontario after attempted extirpation. | The elk population is thought to be stable or increasing. | 187 elk reintroduced in the French River area between 1999-2001 to supplement the existing population and to assist it in increasing their reproductive rate beyond their mortality rate. |
| | Exceptional population size - Birds | Double-crested cormorant | The significant population numbers have caused some controversy regarding appropriate management between managing bodies and the public. Cormorants are a part of the ecosystem, however excessive droppings can decimate areas used as nesting grounds. Many also believe excessive consumption of fish by cormorants is contributing to a decline in fish stocks. | The OMNR generally does not oil eggs (OMNR 2006). One study by Ridgeway et al. (2006) is determining the interrelationship of cormorants as predators and fish as prey. |
| | Exceptional population size – Invertebrates | Zebra mussels (not represented in 1986) | Invasive Species - the zebra mussel cleanses the water column which permits greater light penetration. Having no natural predators, they are found abundantly throughout the French River. They colonize on and suffocate biota, clog boat propellers, intake valves etc. The sharp edge creates a hazard for swimmers. | OMNR has released educational material and information on how to slow or stop the spread of zebra mussels to other water bodies. |
| 6.2 | Rare Animal Species | | | |
| 6.2.13 | Herptiles | E. Massasauga rattlesnake concentration on French River Island and delta area in general. | Population numbers appear to be increasing (anecdotal); have also been found in the Killarney area. | The French River Visitor Centre dedicates exhibits to education and public awareness about the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake. |

4.0 CULTURAL VALUES

4.1 BACKGROUND

The French River continues to be used as a travel route, primarily for recreational canoeists and boaters, and is highly integrated with the local Aboriginal culture. Several First Nations Reserves about the river and the park boundaries (Map 2) and many others are located in the area. The river is still a focal point in many cultural ceremonies, and is central to the theme of the French River Visitor Centre, “Voices of the River.” From the nomination document, cultural features of interest include:

- Canadian Development
 - Playing a key role in the development of Canada, linking traditional aboriginal travel corridors for the fur trade and initial explorations of Canada for centuries by Shield Archaic to pre-contact aboriginal people
 - For 200 years the area was a busy thoroughway in the fur trade economy of free traders, Northwest Company voyageurs and the Hudson’s Bay Company
- Cultural Associations
 - Having strong associations with several persons and events, such as warring movements of the Hurons and Algonquins allied against the Iroquois, active in the area in the 1600’s. The later displaced the Nipissings from the French River
 - Samuel de Champlain, Etienne Brule, Thompson, McKenzie and others on their explorations sometimes considered it inhospitable in their search for new settlement lands but many also regarded it as a vital travel link through the wilderness in their search for New France
- Archaeological and Historic Structures, Works or Sites
 - Some archaeological sites have been identified which indicate it can further an understanding of the area’s pre-history and early years of the fur trade
 - The river contains outstanding examples of a significant setting which continues to be representative of apparent wilderness that occurred historically
 - Archaeological assessment for French River Visitor Centre did not produce cultural findings of significance
- Theme Representation, Themes in Canadian History
 - Pre-contact with Aboriginal peoples tribes and bands
 - Early European contact, exploration and the fur trade
 - Transportation during the 17th century
 - Changing perceptions of the landscape from resource exploitation to conservation
 - Literature is no longer considered representative of the framework, therefore writings of explorers, missionaries, surveyors and artists (e.g. Radisson and Champlain) are not included.



4.2 CONDITION AND CHANGES SINCE LAST REPORT

The French River Visitor Centre⁷

2007 marked the first full season of operation for the French River Visitor Centre, having over 50,000 people visit. The new Ontario Parks facility has won a number of awards and is currently being reviewed as a candidate to represent Canada at the world renowned Venice Biennale in 2009. It is also under consideration by the Governor General’s Medal programme.

Exhibits provide an array of historical maps and images, as well as detailed reproductions of historical exploration and fur trade artifacts. There are opportunities to hear observations and musings from the journals of Samuel de Champlain, Jean Nicolet and other historical characters. The audio stories also offer teachings, local history and river stewardship perspectives told by neighbouring First Nation community members.



⁷ Information on how the French River Visitor Centre pertains to recreational values can be found in section 5.2.

Journey 2007 – a Festival of Peoples was co-hosted by the *French River Visitor Centre First Nation and Aboriginal Advisory Committee, Ontario Parks, and MNR Parry Sound District* on July 7, 2007. Over 1500 people attended a traditional First Nation Pow-Wow and Métis Rendezvous. The event will be held on an annual basis, with a specific focus each year.

By providing a venue for this and other events, the French River Visitor Centre echoes the traditional role of the French River as a gathering / connecting place, where people come together to learn about natural and cultural heritage and exchange skills, knowledge and ideas in a spirit of friendship and cooperation (CHRS 2007).

Community

Many associations have formed throughout the community with the intention to improve and protect the rivers economic, recreational, cultural and natural values. Where possible, the Park Superintendent is involved at meetings of these committees and associations so that the CHRS and Ontario Parks perspectives and mandates can also be considered.

The Upper French River Cottagers Association (UFRCA) has a comprehensive website for interested parties to keep informed of local and current events, park management and new and pertinent science. The French River Delta Association (FRDA) is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that also organizes and hosts an annual one-day clean up of the French River.

In 2004, two men were fined \$5000, plus site restoration costs of \$2500, for two violations the Federal *Fisheries Act*. It was found that work had been conducted that included the removal of beaver dams and dredging of Ham Creek, as well as a separate incident of placing fill below the high-water mark on the French River. The removal of the beaver dams and subsequent dredging caused sediment to flow from Ham Creek into the French River. The Justice of the Peace ordered that the amount be directed to the FRDA (DFO 2004). The money was used to improve fish habitat along the French River, such as the planting of natural vegetation and the re-establishment of habitat that was lost due to the offence.

Nipissing First Nation Private Land Purchase

In October of 1999, the Nipissing First Nation Band Council purchased a piece of privately owned land at Frank’s Bay. This significant cultural and archaeological property was first documented in 1665 by Galinee. A 1953 archaeological survey uncovered artifacts ranging from approximately 2000 year old pre- archaic “Mattawan” to European pieces. Many Nation members were buried there, as late as the 1940’s.

In 1983, at the request of Nipissing First Nation, the OMNR issued an Order under the Mining Act to protect the burial site. When the property was purchased by new private owners, access to the burial site and camping area become problematic.

The property was again listed in 1998. At this time, the Chief wrote the Ontario Government to request financial assistance for the Nipissing Nation to purchase the land to be held for future generations under the auspice of the Harris’ governments “Ontario’s Living Legacy.” The Ontario Government regretfully could not lend assistance, as the “Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat [did] not have a budget to purchase land in such a situation”.



The Pow-Wow grounds at the French River Visitor Centre host *Journey 2007 – A Festival of People*. The meeting place brings together members from many communities. (Photo courtesy of MNR Staff).

The Nipissing First Nation solicited partnerships with other stakeholders, such as the Dokis First Nation, for whom this site is also a historical village site. The Nipissing First Nation eventually purchased the land independently so that the goal of site protection and access could be met, though the intention to share the land is still a main principle of the property’s management. The site currently exists as a day use only site (Nipissing Historical Account, Undated).

Significant Aboriginal Sites

Many culturally and archaeologically significant pictographs and burial sites are found along the river. At this time, no investigation or analysis of cultural resources specific to the park additions have been completed (OMNR 2007b). In French River Provincial Park, not including the additions, sites that were known to have cultural or historic significance have been protected through appropriate zoning and are monitored.

Through working and communicating with local First Nations, and verified through sites visits, it has come to the attention of the Park Superintendent and others that numerous historical aboriginal burial sites exist along the French River shore. Also, it is now known that a significant pictograph is located near the proposed Highway 400 river crossing (C. Miller, pers. comm. February, 2008). The Ministry of Natural Resources continues to work to identify the archaeological and historical sites that should be protected along the waterway.

Table 3. Cultural Heritage Values of the French River.⁸

| Theme / Sub-theme / Element | Theme Representation 1986 | Changes since 1999 and Threats to Condition | Actions and Related Research | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| 1.0 Resource Harvesting | | | | |
| <i>1.1 Fishing</i> | | | | |
| 1.1.1 | Aboriginal prehistoric fishing | Prehistoric fishing occurred on Georgian Bay by the Dokis First Nations. | None. | Exhibits at the French River Visitor Centre display the history and tell the peoples' story. |
| 1.1.2 | Historic domestic fishing and processing | Fishing camps existed near rapids and waterfalls. | None. | |
| 1.1.3 | Commercial fishing | Commercial Fishing - Gauthier's Fisheries Plant (remains). | None. | Commercial fishing still occurs today in the French River Delta and out into Georgian Bay. There is no commercial fishing within the park boundaries. |
| <i>1.2 Shoreline Resource Harvesting</i> | | | | |
| 1.2.1 | Trapping of fur bearing animals | Aboriginal people have trapped in the area since before European exploration. Voyageurs would transport furs post-European arrival for trade. | Both aboriginal and non-aboriginal persons continue to trap in the area today. | Park Management Plan states: existing commercial operations may continue pending certain requirements. New operations, including trap cabins and trails, will not be permitted . |
| 1.2.2 | Collection of aquatic plants | Cultivation of wild cranberries near Lake Nipissing. | | Park Management Plan states: Existing authorized wild rice harvesting may continue. New operations will not be permitted. |
| 1.2.3 | Hunting of birds and land animals | Historic and modern hunting of birds and land animals . | | Hunting is not permitted within nature reserve zones. Hunting is permitted to continue in all natural environment and historical zones. |
| <i>1.3 Extraction of Water</i> | | | | |
| 1.3.2 | Human consumption | *Historic consumption of water would have occurred at seasonal settlements and at Coponaning town site. | None. | French River cottage and lodge owners obtain their water by individual intake on the river - no public system relies on the river as a reservoir. |

⁸ As the cultural themes have been significantly revised since the last report, some elements recorded here were not included in the 1999 report, and vice versa. Asterisked paragraphs refer to representation that was not included in 1986.

| Theme / Sub-theme / Element | Theme Representation 1986 | Changes since 1999 and Threats to Condition | Actions and Related Research |
|--|--|--|--|
| 2.0 Water Transport | | | |
| <i>2.1 Commercial Transportation</i> | | | |
| 2.1.1 | Prehistoric trade | Prehistoric fur harvesting was traded internecline prior to European contact. | None. |
| 2.1.2 | Historic human-powered freight | Aboriginal travel and trade route (national significance). Voyageur Route - European fur trade route. (Northwest Company / Hudson's Bay Company). Fur trade artifacts retrieved from the French River in areas of difficult water, such at rapids and falls (e.g., Five Mile Rapids, Recollet Falls). | None. Some original freight items and replicas are exhibited at the French River Visitor Centre. |
| 2.1.4 | Surface bulk transportation | Log running for entire river length. Coponaning, French River village, spilling and booming out grounds. | None. Coponaning is included as historical zone in FRPP Management Plan (H4). |
| <i>2.2 Transportation Services</i> | | | |
| 2.2.2 | Navigational improvements | Historic portages e.g. Recollet Falls. | Plaque erected by FFRHP is in good condition. |
| <i>2.3 Exploration and Surveying</i> | | | |
| 2.3.1 | French exploration | Champlain; Brûlé (1615); Thompson *Radisson and des Groseilliers (1653). | None. Exhibits at the French River Visitor Centre tell the story of the French explorers. |
| 3.0 Riparian Settlement | | | |
| <i>3.1 Siting of Dwellings</i> | | | |
| 3.1.1 | Shoreline seasonal dwellings | Aboriginal habitation sites, over 50 archaeological sites documented. | None. |
| 3.1.2 | Riverside homesteads and farms | Coponaning townsite, abandoned lumber village. | None. Coponaning is included as historical zone in FRPP Management Plan (H4). |
| <i>3.2 River-based Communities</i> | | | |
| 3.2.1 | Permanent shoreline Aboriginal settlements | *Dokis First Nation has been in existence since pre-contact times, first settling on Georgian Bay islands for fur and fish, and as the resources waned, moved to where they are located today (E. Chevrette, Pers. Comm. February 2008). | None. |
| 3.2.3 | River industry-based communities | Coponaning townsite, abandoned lumber village. | None. A representative portion of Coponaning is included as historical zone in FRPP Management Plan (H4). |
| <i>3.3 River-influenced Transportation</i> | | | |
| 3.3.3 | Rail bridges | CP and Hwy 69 bridges at French R. Gorge, CN trestle bridge at Hartley Bay. | None. |

| Theme / Sub-theme / Element | Theme Representation 1986 | Changes since 1999 and Threats to Condition | Actions and Related Research |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 4.0 Culture and Recreation | | | |
| <i>4.1 Spiritual Associations</i> | | | |
| 4.1.1 | Sacred or spiritual sites | Petroglyphs at Recollet Falls Cross Island - Jesuit commemorative cross; Kennedy Island pictographs. *Numerous pictographs located along the river. | None. Recollet Falls included as historical zone in FRPP Management Plan (H3). A portion of H3 was rezoned as development zone D1 to accommodate the Visitor Centre. Sensitive areas are reviewed and assessed prior to construction so that no values are compromised. |
| 4.1.2 | Ritual or ceremonial structures and sites | | A Pow Wow site has been incorporated into the Visitor Centre surroundings. Local native medicinal plants have been re-established on disturbed lands at the French River Visitor Centre site. |
| 4.1.3 | Aboriginal burial places. | Aboriginal burial grounds, Dead Island and Mary's Bay. | Visiting boaters pose possible threat to integrity of aboriginal burial site on Dead Island. Increased Ontario Parks and Conservation Officer presence along with interpretive facility educate the user and enforce the sites protection. A picnic site located on the island has been removed. The 2006 map still denotes the burial site and a picnicking facility, drawing attention to the location. Through working and communicating with local First Nations, it has become apparent that numerous historical aboriginal burial places exist along the French River's shores. The 2006 FRPP map has removed references to the burial grounds at Mary's Bay. Other references to burial grounds may be removed at next printing. |
| <i>4.2 Cultural Expression</i> | | | |
| 4.2.1 | Riverside museums, art galleries and commemorative structures. | | The French River Visitors Centre on Highway 69 interprets the regions history, tells the story of it's people and educates visitors. The French River Visitor Centre has been nominated / won numerous architectural awards for incorporation into its' surrounding environment, quality of workmanship and exhibits within. |
| 4.2.2 | Culturally associated sites | Aboriginal Pictographs, depicting travel and hunting, are at Chaudière Rapids. | The recently completed French River Visitor Centre portrays the culture of the river over thousands of years. |
| 4.2.3 | River-based cultural landscapes. | *The French River is an integral part of the cultural landscape, and a defining boundary between northern and southern Ontario. | None. Park additions include Recreational values and definitive ecological boundaries: |

| Theme / Sub-theme / Element | | Theme Representation 1986 | Changes since 1999 and Threats to Condition | Actions and Related Research |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| 4.2.4 | Architectural responses to river locations. | | The French River Visitor Centre. | The French River Visitors Centre has incorporated the River's existence as an integral part of the building design |
| 4.3 | <i>Early Recreation</i> | | | |
| 4.3.1 | Recreational boating. | Arthur and Kinney canoe route trip in 1895. | None. | Popular canoe-route author, Kevin Callan, publishes book "A Paddler's Guide to Killarney and the French River" (Callan 2006). |
| 4.3.2 | Angling. | Lodge and sport fishing industry has been integral part of economy and recreation on the French River since European settlement. | Sport fish populations, specifically walleye, have recovered in the Upper and Lower French River. | Bass population have increased with warming temperatures. Northern pike populations have declined. |
| 4.3.3 | Land-based touring. | | Increased marketing of Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs trails increases the use of the new connections. | Pickerel River and French River recreation bridges - main purpose is to connect southern and northern Ontario snowmobile trails Otter Bay snowmobile bridge and trail. |
| 4.3.4 | Organized river recreation facilities and clubs. | Recreational resorts and clubs, cottages, sport fishing, Locke's Rock. | Fractional ownership and rental opportunities (or like) at many lodges and resorts. | |
| 5.0 | Jurisdictional Use | | | |
| 5.1 | <i>Conflict and Military Association</i> | | | |
| 5.1.1 | Aboriginal internecine conflict. | Huron, Algonquin, Nipissing and Iroquois conflict. | None. | |
| 5.2 | <i>Boundaries</i> | | | |
| 5.2.2 | Interprovincial and inter-territorial boundaries. | *Informally recognized cultural and economic boundary between northern and southern Ontario. | None. | |
| 5.2.3 | Land use boundaries. | *The French River Provincial Park boundaries and zone boundaries prohibit and control certain activities and sites for the protection of the River and the enjoyment of the visitor. | The Provincial Park boundaries were expanded to enhance natural heritage representation and ecological integrity. Hunting is permitted within natural environment and historical zones and the newly regulated areas (OMNR 1999). | |

| Theme / Sub-theme / Element | | Theme Representation 1986 | Changes since 1999 and Threats to Condition | Actions and Related Research |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| 5.3 | <i>Environmental regulation</i> | | | |
| 5.3.1 | Flood control. | *39 impoundments along the river and within the watershed assist in controlling the rivers water levels. None of the dams are regulated within park boundaries (Map 4. Most impoundments have not been GPS'd). | Public Works Canada is proposing to rebuild the Big Chaudière Dam, which is not regulated within Provincial Park boundaries. Dokis First Nations are exploring hydroelectric development outside the park. | |
| 5.3.2 | Improvements in water management. | | | Improvements in communications have been made - prior to water being released upstream, inhabitants downstream are now informed of the expected time and approximate flow volume of the release. |
| 5.3.3 | Improvements in aquatic ecosystem management. | | See right. | The Environmental Assessment Act (1990), the Class EA for Parks and Conservation Reserves (2005) the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council (2006), OMNR Stewardship Initiatives and educational materials. |
| 5.3.4 | Regulation of river access and use. | | French River Provincial Park becomes operational. | With the French River Provincial Park becoming operational, not only is the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act better enforced (formerly under the Provincial Parks Act), but a greater budget has been assigned, staffing has increased and fees and permits have been implemented, thus back country camping and associated activities are better managed. |

5.0 RECREATION VALUES

5.1 BACKGROUND

The French River Nomination Document states that the designation of the French River to the CHRS is based on the recreational values below, updated to reflect current management decisions.

- Recreational Opportunities and Related Natural Values
 - Small craft boating, sport fishing, canoeing, hiking, camping, picnicking, scenic viewing, heritage appreciation, resort accommodation, wildlife viewing and hunting

- Fur trade romance of the French River comes from claims in historic writings of Voyageurs having paddled the 110km downstream in one day, portaging only twice. Several rapids have produced a large number of artifacts that show the river could be quite unforgiving
- By the 20th Century the wilderness character of the area was becoming a marketable commodity to tourism interests – the Grand Trunk Railway promoted the French as a sportsman’s paradise and tourism outlet
- Recreational Carrying Capacity
 - The French River is within 300km of Toronto and other major southern Ontario populations
 - The river is capable of supporting current levels of use during the peak spring season and has experienced a significant increase in use during the summer and fall months since becoming operational and the French River Visitor Centre opened. The river could receive additional use during the fall and winter with appropriate management and recreation opportunities

5.2 CONDITION AND CHANGES SINCE LAST REPORT

French River Visitor Centre

The French River Visitors Centre was one of several visitors centres planned for Ontario Parks in 2001 (EBR. RA01E0001). Over six years, planning, consultation and construction engaged numerous interests including community and Aboriginal partners, government ministries, contracting and architectural firms and consultants. The Municipality of Killarney supplied 30 thousand dollars. The Municipality of French River supplied 100 thousand dollars and forwarded a 500 thousand dollar grant from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund to be put towards the Visitor Centre. Numerous other corporate partners also made generous donations. This 5.6 million dollar project was developed by Ontario Parks to be consistent with the



The French River Visitor Centre interior receives upwards of 50,000 visitors annually. (Photo courtesy of MNR Staff).

objectives set out in the 1993 Management Plan, and as part of promoting this significant area within the Great Lakes Heritage Coast initiative. The primary objective of the centre is to orient park visitors to the natural and cultural heritage and recreational attributes of the French River.

From the centre’s inception, First Nations interests and participation have been solicited and incorporated as an integral part of the development of the Visitor Centre, specifically through the Waabnoong Bemjiwang Association of First Nations, which represents the four First Nations communities that are closely associated with the French River (BSN et al. 2002). The First Nations Joint Management Advisory Committee was created to advise of local First Nations interests in regards to the Visitor Centre and continues to work closely with Ontario Parks today on current and future Visitor Centre management decisions.

Four development options were evaluated, including a ‘do nothing’ alternative.

Option 1, placing the Visitor Centre near the top of the north-facing rock slope, posed the potential for slightly greater environmental impacts, but also very good interpretive opportunities. By mitigating the environmental impacts, this was the preferred option and an option at moderate cost. The building is not visible from the highway, and thus required additional signage to announce the centre and direct traffic flow to it (BSN et al. 2002).

A Stage II Archaeological assessment of the development site was completed by Woodland Heritage Services Limited in 2000. In 2002, an assessment of the remainder of the site was completed. Nether study identified cultural heritage resources in either area, and stated that “there was no further concern with regards to cultural heritage” (WHS Ltd. 2000).

A minor amendment to the park Management Plan allowed for the adjustment of a 2 hectare portion of historical zone H3 to be rezoned as development zone D1. The French River Visitor Centre footprint is located entirely within D1. The river frontage consists of a dramatic, 15 metre granite canyon. The site elevation permits dramatic scenic vistas. Coupled with the iconic iron bridge and the newly installed recreation suspension bridge, the views create memorable images for both passing motorists and visitors.

As the “Gateway to Northern Ontario” continues to receive increasing traffic, the Visitor Centre also included the conversion of a previous Ministry of Transportation rest stop to a year-round rest stop and parking area for approximately 76 vehicles, including busses and RVs. Safe access and egress from the site was improved significantly from the original stop. The Visitor Centre and associated facilities provide exceptional day use opportunities to over 50,000 visitors annually. The Visitor Centre does not charge admission.

The original rest stop had produced or augmented a wetland and incidentally created habitat for both the Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake (EMR) and its prey. It is also believed that the presence of EMR at this busy and less than ideal habitat site is in part due to the unnatural deposition of foodstuffs from travellers attracting a rodent population. Otherwise, mostly common wildlife is found at the site. During construction, the site was kept exceptionally clean and daily patrols for EMR were completed prior to work. All construction activities were done in consideration of the snakes rarity and sensitivities. Now that the Visitor Centre is operational, the site still receives exceptional maintenance.

Previously unmanaged trails have been naturalized, except where retained as part of the recreational path system. The trail system is an integral part of the interpretive program for the building and displays interpretive as well as directional signage.

The Visitor Centre was constructed in part to reinforce the local tourist industry by attracting and introducing visitors to the area. A study by the Municipality of French River, *Expanding Tourism within the Municipality of French River* (K.A.L. 2000) also recommended construction of a similar centre. Use of the parks' current recreational opportunities is facilitated by encouraging visitors to use the 48 commercial establishments that are dotted along the shore, nine of which issue park permits, as bases to explore the park. As the French River Visitor Centres' and French River Provincial Parks' intentions are to compliment current industry, goods and services offered at the Visitor Centre are aimed at creating a non-competitive environment with local business.

A Tourism Information office within the French River Visitor Centre provides information about French River Provincial Park and other French River and area attractions and accommodations. The tourism information function is operated by a partnership of local municipalities and First Nations.

The Visitor Centre itself is approximately 9000 square feet and includes 4,500 square feet of exhibit space. Three thousand square feet of exhibit space displays a variety of historic events that have occurred in the French River area. The Visitor Centre also allows both scenic viewing of and from the river. The French River Visitor Centre has been an extremely successful initiative, bringing increased awareness of the natural and cultural heritage values of French River Provincial Park and area. Interpretation of the rivers' significant natural and human heritage values create appreciation of river values and build understanding of the importance of protection.

Recreation Bridge

The French River Recreation Bridge was installed in 2005, and though a separate initiative, was planned to be complementary to the French River Visitor Centre. This bridge was a necessary addition to the Ontario Federation of Snowmobiles trail system, as there was no previous connection between northern and southern Ontario trails. Previously, riders risked crossing the river, or would use the shuttle service over the Highway 69 bridge. This connector will also promote northern Ontario tourism through improved access.

The bridge provides mid-river viewing opportunities. It also discourages river photography from the Highway 69 bridge, instead encouraging it to occur from the much safer Recreation Bridge. The bridge is tastefully incorporated into its' environment and also provides a scenic western view for passing motorists.

Although passing paddlers will see the new bridge en route, from a river perspective it does not register as a major visual deterrent since paddlers must also travel below two rail bridges and the Highway 69 bridge. With the future construction of two new river crossings related to the four-laning of Highway 69, this area will become further inundated with human 'improvements'. These visual impacts will be concentrated in one relatively small area, leaving the majority of the river system untouched.

Operating Provincial Park



Aerial view of the French River and Visitor Centre at the Highway 69 river crossing. The recreation bridge, highway bridge, the new parking area and the new year-round rest stop are also visible. (Photo courtesy of MNR Staff).

Ontario's Provincial Parks differ between operational – a corporate-set standard level of increased service, facilities, staffing and collection of fees; and non-operational – minimal staffing, service and limited facilities, with no collection of fees. Until 2005, French River Provincial Park was non-operational. With the anticipation of the French River Visitor Centre, Ontario Parks made the park operational. This decision improves recreation opportunities and management on the river, includes the implementation of a Recreation Management Program, facilitates various activities and mitigates impact through facility development (e.g. access/egress, trails, portages, interpretation, signs, campsites). It also encourages tourism initiatives by providing off-site information.

The Park's operating status was phased in over three years beginning in 2005. Permits were issued and made available by Park Wardens to campers who were unaware of the new requirements. Restrictions on river use were enforced, improvements were made to existing campsites facilities and interpretation was provided (ongoing). Safety was improved and washroom facilities were included at the Visitor Centre, as mentioned above.

Park use has fluctuated over the past decade. In 2004, prior to becoming operational, the park was not able to track visitation as permits were not issued. Visitation could only be estimated through local businesses. Since becoming



The French River Recreation Bridge spans the French River Gorge, providing a spectacular scenic view of the river and a safe connection between northern and southern Ontario snowmobile trails. (Photo courtesy of MNR Staff).

operational, visitation has increased to 20,799 camper nights, up from 17,465 in 2005. Visitation in 2006 only reached 15,060 (OMNR 2008), probably due to the newly imposed fees. As recreationists realised similar river opportunities were limited, it is speculated many returned for the 2007 season and will continue to frequent the river in the future. Day use numbers are not regulated or recorded on the French River.

Many parks in the Ontario Parks system are connected to the provincial Ontario Parks Reservation System. The French River is not, and though its incorporation to the reservation system would likely increase visitation and revenue in underused summer and fall seasons, provide more precise trips for recreationists, better manage campsites and reduce off-site camping, there is currently no intention to make this step.

Recreation Assessment

In 2005, the areas set aside as part of Ontario's Living Legacy were assessed for recreation potential. The French River Provincial Park

Additional Recreation Assessment report (2005) details recreational opportunities, identifies and evaluates significant landforms and features, existing and potential recreational uses, and means of access using recreation factors. Only the Eastern Group (near Lake Nipissing) and the Western Group (lower French and Pickerel Rivers) are discussed, as an earlier assessment revealed limited recreation potential in the other additions. These additions will contribute to ecological integrity rather than recreation potential.

Table 4. Recreational Values of the French River⁹.

| Recreational Capability Themes and Sub-themes | French R. Recreation Capability Ratings | Significant Actions, Research or Related Studies | Description of Current Situation | Changes or Threats to Value(s) |
|---|---|--|---|--|
| 1.0 Boating | | | | |
| 1.1 whitewater canoe and kayak | High | 2005 Recreation Assessment. FRPP Map republished in 2006 with GPS'd campsites locations and OLL additions. | Particularly in Lower French, mazes of channels and islands broken up by areas of rapids, falls and chutes are particularly well-suited. Almost limitless routes of the Georgian Bay coast provide opportunities for exploring and camping. | Decreasing water levels in the Great Lakes are a concern. Currently, dams along the French River mean water levels remain predictable. Potential for user conflicts in motorboat accessible areas. |

⁹ Chart format is adapted from the recreational evaluation framework of the document *Canadian Heritage Rivers System: Systems Study of Rivers in Manitoba* (HTFC 1997). French River recreational capability is rated qualitatively. It is not known how similar criteria are as used in the HTFC (1997) report ratings.

| Recreational Capability Themes and Sub-themes | | French R. Recreation Capability Ratings | Significant Actions, Research or Related Studies | Description of Current Situation | Changes or Threats to Value(s) |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| 1.2 | extended canoe tripping | High | 50 unsustainable campsites have been decommissioned while over 100 pit toilets have been installed at others; sites signed and new sites created where required. The parks operational status facilitates recreation management. | Mazes of channels, islands and bays provide opportunities for exploration and intimate encounters with the shoreline. Paddling from the Upper French to the Lower French, including the Bustard Islands, can provide approximately two weeks of continuous backcountry canoeing and camping. | Since becoming operational management and maintenance have improved and staffing has increased. 2007 visitation rose almost 20% over 2005. Potential for user conflicts in motorboat accessible areas. |
| 1.3 | day paddling and rowing (from urban centre) | Low | "Expanding Tourism within the Municipality of French River" K.A.L. 2000. | Small communities surround the French River. Numbers able to participate in day trips are thus low. The French River is located approximately 1.5 hours south of Sudbury, the nearest large urban centre. Local inhabitants use the river regularly. | The encroachment of southern cities and development in the French River area has increased visitation especially in summer. Potential for user conflicts in motorboat accessible areas. |
| 1.4 | high speed boating | Low | 2005 Recreation Assessment, OMNR | Cottages, lodges and public boat launches both increase the ability to store and launch boats. Narrow channels and natural obstacles obstruct high speed boating in many areas. Open areas in the Upper French are more appropriate for this activity, and sustain it at a level that detracts from a wilderness experience. | Particularly on the Upper French with increased cottage and lodge development more visitors use high speed watercraft. Noise regulations were introduced in 2003. The majority of the river course provides solitude and a wilderness experience. |
| 1.5 | motorized pleasure cruising | High | 2005 Recreation Assessment, OMNR | Cottages, lodges and public boat launches increase the ability to launch boats. Two tramways (Bass Creek and Recollet Falls) facilitate motorboat movement. | Increased visitation and boat traffic create the potential for user and wildlife conflict, especially in narrow areas. Oil and gas from motors contaminates water. |
| 1.6 | commercial boat tours | Low | A well-planned local TV commercial in 2005 increase business significantly. | Lodges offer tours of the French River and Georgian Bay area. One large commercial boat tour operates on Lake Nipissing, the Chief Commanda. Other commercial tour boats operate on the French River. | None. |

| Recreational Capability Themes and Sub-themes | | French R. Recreation Capability Ratings | Significant Actions, Research or Related Studies | Description of Current Situation | Changes or Threats to Value(s) |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| 2.0 Angling | | | | | |
| 2.1 | day angling (from urban centre) | Med | 2005 Recreation Assessment, OMNR | Small communities surround the French River. Numbers able to participate in day trips are thus lower than if located near to a large urban centre. Angling is a very popular local activity. | Fishing regulations remain restrictive to species such as walleye and Muskellunge. Fisheries management on the French also includes creel surveys and fall walleye index netting. |
| 2.2 | weekend angling (from urban centre) | High | 2005 Recreation Assessment, OMNR | Sudbury, the nearest large urban centre, is a reasonable distance for weekend trips. Other weekend visitors will travel from up to four hours away. Lodges, resorts, restaurants and cottages accommodate a large number of anglers in peak seasons. | |
| 2.3 | extended angling vacation | High | 2005 Recreation Assessment, OMNR. The French River is managed as a trophy fishery. A number of public and private stakeholders and interest groups engage in ongoing research and monitoring. | Lodges, resorts, restaurants, cottages and campsites accommodate a variety of anglers in peak seasons, such as lodge guests, private camp owners and guests, canoe trippers and motorboat enthusiasts. | Events early in the decade stunted foreign, especially American, travel to Canada for several years, resulting in difficult years for many tourist-based businesses. Visitation has increased, however the high Canadian dollar, at par with the US dollar in 2007, is thought to be partially responsible for again lagging American tourism. |
| 2.6 | <i>specific species</i> | | | | |
| 2.6.1 | walleye | High | French River Cooperative Fisheries Unit and French River Community Fisheries Enhancement Committee continue to research and monitor. Walleye egg harvest and stocking halted in 2000. Streambed rehabilitation in 2000. Park Warden present full-time in three seasons; part time Conservation Officer in winter. | Walleye have recovered in the Upper and Lower French River; numbers remain low in the Central section. | If the current trend continues, there is a possibility that the next fishing regulations will relax slot sizes for walleye. |
| 2.6.2 | pike | Med | | Anecdotal decline in pike stocks. | |
| 2.6.5 | smallmouth bass | High | | Increasing smallmouth bass population. | |
| 2.6._ | Muskellunge | Med | | Muskellunge maintain more restrictive slot sizes. | |

| Recreational Capability Themes and Sub-themes | French R. Recreation Capability Ratings | Significant Actions, Research or Related Studies | Description of Current Situation | Changes or Threats to Value(s) | |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| 3.0 Water Content | | | | | |
| 3.1 | swimming | High | | Current varies and can be strong. Sheltered bays and lake-like areas along the river are more suited to swimming. | Water quality is generally reported as 'good', however for the first time, a potentially toxic blue-green algae bloom was reported. |
| 3.2 | water skiing | Med | | Narrow channels along much of the river prevent this activity from happening safely. In the more open and developed Upper French River, there is both the equipment required and the population to participate. | Increased visitation and boat traffic could cause the potential for user conflict, especially in narrower areas of the river. |
| 4.0 Water Associated Activities | | | | | |
| 4.1 | trail use | Low | | No formal trails exist within the French River Provincial Park Additions. Only day trails exist in the pre-OLL park. Many opportunities exist for independent land exploration. | Challenge will be managing peoples movements on land and potential conflicts with species at risk such as the EMR. |
| 4.2 | camping | High | Park becomes operational in 2005 | 230 campsites exist along the French River. Most have privies installed and all have been signed and have had fire pits created. | The park now issues permits to control and manage camping opportunities along the river, though camping opportunities are still first come first served. |
| 4.3 | hunting | High | The park additions will allow hunting to remain status quo | Sport hunting, as per the regulations, is permitted in the additions and in the pre-OLL park, <i>except</i> in nature reserve zones. | A phase-out of non-aboriginal trapping is intended for 2013 in the pre-OLL area, as per the 1993 Management Plan. In the Additions, no new traplines are permitted. |
| 5.0 Winter Activities | | | | | |
| 5.1 | Snowmobiling / dog sledding | High | | Snowmobiling - popular winter pass-time in northern Ontario. The Ontario Federation of Snowmobiles maintains a network of trails. | Three new recreation bridges have been installed across the Pickerel and French Rivers, and at Otter Bay; connect northern and southern snowmobile trails and create safe passage. |
| 5.2 | x-country skiing | Med | | No formal trails exist in the additions, and only day trails exist in the pre-OLL area. Snowmobile trails are groomed for snowmobiles - it is dangerous for cross-country skiers to use these. River ice does not provide a safe route. Most/all x-country skiing would be done back country. | None |

| Recreational Capability Themes and Sub-themes | French R. Recreation Capability Ratings | Significant Actions, Research or Related Studies | Description of Current Situation | Changes or Threats to Value(s) | |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| 6.0 Natural Heritage Appreciation | | | | | |
| 6.1 | wildlife | High | Ongoing monitoring, research, education and interpretation, especially elk, walleye and other sport fish, Eastern Massasauga rattlesnake and other Species at Risk. | Hunting is permitted in the majority of the park, which reduces faunal numbers but in restricted quantities. | Commercial trapping to be phased out in 2013 in pre-OLL park; no new traplines will be permitted in the additions. |
| 6.2 | vegetation | High | OLL Life Science Checksheets have not been completed. | 450 species of plants documented to date. Northern Deciduous forests and rock barrens dominated by open growing white, red and jack pine (primarily). Limited pockets of sugar maple, yellow birch and white pine found on deeper soil sites. Wetlands dot the river and provide habitat for rare species. | Additions have improved the ecological integrity of the original site. Increased visitation will increase pressure on fuelwood resources and impact coarse woody debris. Visitors are encouraged to use camp stoves. |
| 6.3 | vistas / scenic quality | High | Three recreation bridges and one Visitor Centre have been constructed in the area. | The recreation bridges and the viewing platform at the Visitor Centre provide new and elevated locations for viewing. River and shore can be viewed while boating and provide opportunities to view scenery that remains unchanged since historic times. | The centre was incorporated into the surroundings and does little to detract from the quality of the scenery. |
| 6.4 | geological features / water features | Med / High | Geographic significance ranked as moderate. Overall, features were ranked as high (OMNR 2005b). | No features in the additions have been determined to be scarce or unique. The French River Gorge has been determined to have provincial significance. | The most sensitive features to recreational use are the low productivity forest sites within the Western Group of additions. Recreation use is likely to be concentrated along the shore avoiding these sensitive areas. |
| 7.0 Human Heritage Appreciation | | | | | |
| 7.1 | historic sites | High | Historic/archaeological values of the FRPP. Additions have not been inventoried at this time. | Four historic zones exist within the park boundary - H1: Chaudière Rapids; H2: Five Mile Rapids; H3: Recollet Falls; H4: Coponaning. | Zoning has been amended at site H3 as original boundary was established arbitrarily. 2ha was rezoned as development for the Visitor Centre to meet MTO access requirements. (Map 3). |

| Recreational Capability Themes and Sub-themes | | French R. Recreation Capability Ratings | Significant Actions, Research or Related Studies | Description of Current Situation | Changes or Threats to Value(s) |
|---|------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| 7.2 | cultural landscapes | High | Numerous reports regarding construction of the French and Pickerel River Recreation Bridges and the French River Visitor Centre. Cultural/archaeological values of the FRPP. Additions have not been inventoried at this time. | Cottages, camps and lodges dot the shores. These users make up a large portion of visitors to the region. Transient recreationists frequent the park in large numbers to paddle and camp. | The four-laning of Highway 69 will certainly change the landscape of the French River, and currently also threatens to occlude a pictograph site located directly under the proposed crossing |
| 7.4 | cultural events / activities | High | The construction of the French River Visitor Centre. The construction of the aboriginal ceremonial grounds. Numerous reports associated with the construction | The French River Visitor Centre, provides for cultural and historical learning and cultural gatherings. A traditional medicinal plant garden and grounds for Aboriginal ceremonies have been constructed adjacent to the French River Visitor Centre, and have hosted events such as sun rise ceremonies and Pow Wows | Picnic facilities have been removed from Dead Island - 2006 map still denotes the site as burial ground with a picnicking site |

6.0 INTEGRITY VALUES

At the time of nomination, the integrity guidelines did not exist in their current precise format. The 1999 report better defined Integrity Values, though they have since been amended. They are now grouped into three categories: Natural Integrity, Cultural Integrity and Recreational Integrity.

6.1 BACKGROUND

The French River contains all the necessary and appropriate features and attributes of the elements of the Integrity Values to demonstrate key representation, save for man-made impoundments on the river which were grandfathered in with the new frameworks. The current guidelines are applied to the French River Integrity Values in the following table. Integrity Values on the French River have not been formally assessed since the frameworks' revision.



The park now seasonally employs two Park Wardens and an Operations Assistant (summer) and one part-time Conservation Officer (winter), helping to preserve the integrity of the park environment. (Photo courtesy of MNR Staff).

6.2 CONDITION AND CHANGES SINCE LAST REPORT

Table 5. French River Integrity Guidelines since designation and the previous report

| Category | CHRS Principles, Procedures and Operational Guidelines (2000) | French River Integrity Guideline/s | Changes or Threats to River Integrity |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| Recreation Integrity Values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> River possesses water of a quality suitable for contact recreational activities, including those recreational opportunities for which it is nominated | The French River has a world class trophy fishery and exceptional opportunities for boating, canoeing and kayaking, as well as a thriving cottage and lodge economy. | None. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> River's appearance is capable of providing river travelers with a continuous natural experience, or a combined natural and cultural experience, without significant interruption by human intrusions | The wild state of the French River is sustained in part due to the surroundings, inhospitable for significant development. Historical and modern developments in some areas of the river may be considered a part of the River's story. Cottages and resorts may detract from the appearance in certain sections. Most of the river remains as in historical times. | Development on private land holdings along the French River have increased, though do not detract in any significant way. Park additions in 1997 (Keep it Wild) and 2004 (OLL) enhance the recreational integrity by increasing the separation with potentially conflicting land uses (e.g., road access for forest management). |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> River is capable of supporting recreational uses without significant loss of, or impact on, its visual character | The river supports low impact recreational opportunities, and has experienced an almost 20% increase in visitation since becoming operational. High impact activities such as houseboats, yachts, personal watercraft and sport fish harvesting continue to engage participants. | French River Provincial Park became operational in 2005. The recent 5.6 million dollar French River Visitor Centre has attracted tourists worldwide and has won numerous awards. |
| Cultural Integrity Values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size sufficient to include significant representations of all the features, activities or other phenomena which give the river its outstanding cultural value | The entire length of the French River Provincial Park and some important associated channels are both protected and designated. The previous 200 metre boundaries not considering ecological boundaries have been modified through park expansion. | The French River Provincial Park expansion through OLL further protects important areas along the river. Some areas remained with the original 200m boundary where it was not feasible to pursue a greater area. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual character enables uninterrupted appreciation of the river's historical importance | Significant cottage and resort developments in the Upper French persist but do not overwhelm the area, balanced by large areas of mostly undisturbed natural setting elsewhere, where characteristics are similar to fur trade times. | Development continues at a controlled pace. Derelict lodges that remain can be considered a part of the rivers' history. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality of the nominated section does not detract from the visual character or the cultural experience provided by its cultural values | Water quality does not detract from the natural values and does not limit activities. Water quality has been measured as 'good' (UFRCA). | A blue-green algae bloom was reported between Wolesley Bay and 18 Mile Bay in 2007, verified by the Ministry of the Environment. |

| Category | CHRS Principles, Procedures and Operational Guidelines (2000) | French River Integrity Guideline/s | Changes or Threats to River Integrity |
|--------------------------|---|---|--|
| Natural Integrity Values | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominated section is of sufficient size to include significant representations of all the natural processes, features, or other phenomena which give the river its outstanding natural value. | The river length is nominated in full and protected provincially in full. Key representation of natural processes, features or other phenomena are incorporated within the nominated length of the river. | Greater integrity and completeness has been provided with the increase in park area. Park additions include recreational values/ecological area. Park additions in 1997 (Keep it Wild) and 2004 (OLL additions) enhance the ecological integrity by increasing the area and provide separate with potentially conflicting land uses (e.g., forest management, mineral exploration, quarrying). |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominated section includes those ecosystem components which contribute significantly to the provision of habitat for species in need of protection. | The French River includes significant vegetation, and habitat associations for Species at Risk and other important local species. The Park Management Plan states that management of natural resources will be directed towards protection and resource appreciation. | The French River has been expanded to include areas of the park that were determined to contain important land associations. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No human-made impoundments within the nominated section | There are several impoundments along the French River that have been grandfathered into the CHRS designation. These would otherwise have prevented the River from meeting the CHRS designation requirements. | Impoundments are regulated outside of park boundaries. Potential to rebuild Big Chaudière Dam. Dokis First Nation inquiring about hydro electric development. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All key elements and ecosystem components are unaffected by impoundments located outside the nominated section. | There are dam structures within the watershed that do not impede the key elements and ecosystem components to any significant or recognized degree. | None. |

7.0 REVIEW OF CURRENT PARK MANAGEMENT

The French River Provincial Park Management Plan – Minor Amendment (2007) states that the area will be managed according to four objectives from the repealed Provincial Parks Act, R.S.O. 1990, which also apply to the original park area. The new Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act (2006) provides objectives that supersede those in the management plan:

- Protection: To protect provincially significant elements of the natural and cultural landscapes of Ontario.
- To permanently protect representative ecosystems, biodiversity and provincially significant elements of Ontario’s natural and cultural heritage and to manage these areas to ensure that ecological integrity is maintained.
- To provide opportunities for ecologically sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities and encourage associated economic benefits.

- To provide opportunities for residents of Ontario and visitors to increase their knowledge and appreciation of Ontario's natural and cultural heritage
- To facilitate scientific research and to provide points of reference to support monitoring of ecological change on the broader landscape

The 1993 Management Plan provides direction for the pre-OLL area of the park, where current park policy has remained unchanged and has not been amended in the plan. Zoning, not necessarily indicative of ecological boundaries, has not been completed in the OLL additions. Zoning principles and criteria within provincial parks is currently under review within the Ontario Parks Planning and Research section (Kershaw, W. Pers. comm. April 2008).

Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy (OMNR 1999) identified additions to the existing French River Provincial Park. The Strategy changed some of the provincial policies for existing parks as well as introduced some different management policies for new protected areas. These changes to policy are reflected in the minor amendment.

Although the two management documents, the 1993 Management Plan and the 2007 Management Plan Amendment, provide similar objectives, there is some variation in management. The following table outlines the approach to stewardship in either area.

Table 6. Stewardship Policies Comparison Table of the 1993 French River Provincial Park boundaries and the additions in the 2007 park boundaries

| Stewardship Policies | 1993 French River Boundary (P110e) | 2007 French River Boundary (additions only - P110) |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Vegetation | Non-native species will not be deliberately introduced, as per Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act. Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. | Same. Where invasives exists and threaten park values, a control strategy may be developed. |
| Commercial Forestry | Commercial forestry operations <u>will</u> not be permitted. | Commercial forest harvesting and renewal activities <u>are</u> not permitted. |
| Wild Rice | Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. | Existing authorized wild rice harvesting may continue. New operations will not be permitted. |
| Non-timber Forest Products | Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. | Harvest of non-timber forest products will not be permitted . |
| Fuelwood | Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. | No new fuelwood cutting permits will be issued. Where property does not have road access previously issued fuelwood permits may be allowed to continue. |
| Insects and Disease | Programs may be developed. | Insects and diseases may be managed . |
| Fire | Fire management program will be developed. | Forest fire protection will be carried out in the park as on surrounding lands . |
| Hunting | Removal or harassment of non-game animals is not permitted. Hunting is permitted except within nature reserve zones within the original 1989 park boundary. It is illegal to harvest bullfrogs or snapping turtles. Elk hunting is not permitted. | Same. Sport hunting is permitted to continue within the park additions. Same. Same. |
| Bear Management | Commercial bear hunting is not permitted within Nature Reserve zones. | Commercial bear hunting is permitted to continue in the additions. |
| Trapping | Commercial trapping will be phased out in 2013 | Existing commercial fur harvesting operations may continue where the activity has been licensed or permitted since January 1, 1992 |

| Stewardship Policies | 1993 French River Boundary (P110e) | 2007 French River Boundary (additions only - P110) |
|-----------------------------|--|---|
| | First Nation status persons excepted from phase out | New operations, including trap cabins and trails, will not be permitted |
| Industrial | Mineral exploration and development will not be permitted Hydro-electric development will not be permitted Aggregate extraction is not permitted Application for installation of electrical utilities will be considered | Mineral exploration and mining is not permitted Hydro developments are not permitted in the additions Aggregate extraction is not a permitted use Not explicit in 2007 Management Plan Amendment. |
| Wildlife Management | OMNR seeks to protect EMR habitat in the park | Not explicit in 2007 Management Plan Amendment. |
| Fisheries | Commercial fishing permitted only on the existing licensed areas of Georgian Bay Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. | No commercial operations exist. New operations will not be permitted Fish habitat management may be considered through park planning Angling will be permitted No new baitfish harvesting will be permitted Baitfish harvest units may be allocated if there is a record of activity since January 1, 1992 Stocking of native fish species may be considered |
| Crown Land Management | Adjacent to park will not detract from Park objectives | Crown land will not be sold in the park Additions, with exception on case-by-case basis |
| Roads | New roads will not be developed within the park Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. Expansion of existing roads and rail lines may be permitted | Under certain circumstances, existing roads may continue to be available for access Any future road crossings proposed through the park, where park lands are unavoidable, will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis Ontario Parks is not responsible for the maintenance or upgrade of any roads |
| Trails | Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. | Snowmobile Trunk Trail "C" trail exists, maintained by OFSC ATV use may be authorized on old forest access and tertiary roads New trails (e.g., hiking) may be developed |
| Disposition | Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. Not explicit in 1993 Management Plan. | No land disposition for private use or corporations will be permitted within the park additions Existing authorized Land Use Permits for recreation camps will continue |

French River, P110 – OLL Additions

Two separate areas are included in the OLL additions (P110). Park additions include:

- Natural Areas: 1) French River to Key River 2) Travers Township and Voyageur Channel 3) Struthers Township Upland Forest.
 - All areas are within Ecodistrict 5E-7
- Recreational values/ecological boundaries: 1) Blue Heron-Restoule Wildlands 2) portion of shores of Pickerel River along 14 Mile Island 3) Bertram Twp. 'no-cut' area 4) Burnt Island 5) McDougal Island 6) peninsular shoreline areas on south shore of French River near Hardy Bay and Satchels Bay
 - Areas are within Ecodistricts 5E-7 and 5E-5

The purpose of the Minor Amendment (2007) is to provide direction to ensure custodial management of park resources until a full plan review is conducted, which will include public and Aboriginal consultation. At that time, significant decisions regarding resource stewardship, operations, development and permitted uses will be made (OMNR 2007b).

Great Lakes Heritage Coast

As part of Ontario's Living Legacy, the Great Lakes Heritage Coast policy statement identified the Great Lakes coast for special planning and management consideration. The policy statement supports a comprehensive approach to the protection and enjoyment of significant values found along the coast. Past plans and intentions for protection of the coast included portions, but not the area in its entirety. This management approach considers the broader context required by providing an overall vision for the area. The Heritage Coast policy recognizes the internationally significant cultural, natural, scenic and recreational values of the coast, including the Huron/Georgian Bay shoreline of which the French River Delta is a part. The policy applies to all Crown lands, waters, lakebeds, Crown islands and intervening coastal areas along the Great Lakes shoreline from Port Severn in Georgian Bay to the international border south of Thunder Bay on Lake Superior (OMNR 1999).

Enhanced Management Areas

(From the Management Plan – Minor Amendment, OMNR 2007b)

Two Enhanced Management Areas are adjacent to French River Provincial Park

- *Parry Sound North (E39g-2)*: encompasses 3,696ha and is located just between the larger south western portion of the French River Provincial Park Additions and the Point Grondine 3 First Nation Reserve (OMNR 2004). Management of this area is consistent with the Enhanced Management Area (Great Lakes Coastal Area), policies of the Land Use Strategy and the overall intent of the Great Lakes Heritage Coast land use planning approach (OMNR 1999 and 2004).
- *North Parry Sound North Bay (E119R-2)*: encompasses 82,866ha and is located to the south of the eastern additions. This Enhanced Management Area links a number of other Enhanced Management Areas, as well as conservation reserves and provincial parks, and includes portions of several watershed units. This land use direction complements the protection of recreational values in the French River and Restoule Provincial Parks (OMNR 2004).

7.1 ONTARIO PARKS GUIDING MANAGEMENT DOCUMENTS

Park management follows policy direction from, but not exclusively:

- *Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy* (OMNR 1999), policy clarification amendments (OMNR 2000) and related direction
- *Ontario Provincial Parks Planning and Management Policies* (OMNR 1992) and updates; and the,
- *Ontario Crown Land Use Policy Atlas* (OMNR 2004); and amendments
- *Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy* (OMNR 2005c)
- *Our Sustainable Future* (OMNR 2005d)
- *Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves* (OMNR 2005a)

Important legislation includes:

- *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act S.O. 2006* and regulations.
- *Environmental Assessment Act R.S.O. 1990*.

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9.0 APPENDICES

9.1 APPENDIX A – MAPS

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9.2 APPENDIX B – ADDITIONAL MANAGEMENT

French River Maps

National Topographic Map Series to be viewed for area contained within the 1993 park boundaries:

31L/4
41H/15
41I/1
41I/2

National Topographic Map Series to be viewed for area contained within the 2007 park boundaries:

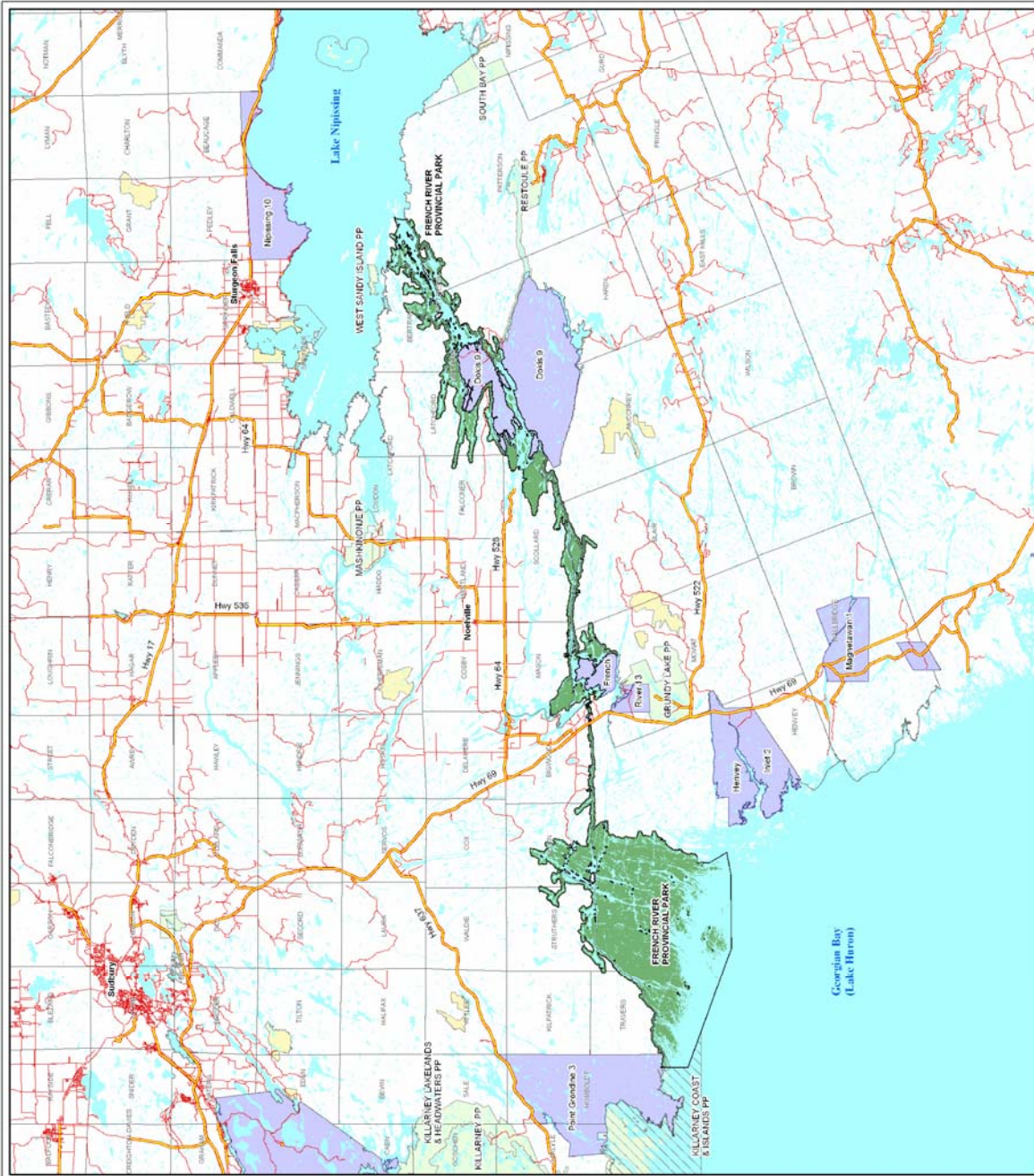
41H
41H/15

Management Plan Amendments - List

- Management Plan Amendment: 99-01 – Minor Amendment of the Plan to change the nature reserve zone referred to in NR2 as Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Habitat to NR2: French River Island Wildlife Habitat
- Management Plan Amendment: 02-01 – Minor Amendment of the Plan to allow the Otter Bay snowmobile trail and bridge in natural environment zone NE2.
- Management Plan Amendment: 2002-01 – Minor Amendment of the Plan to provide for the expansion to development zone D1: Voyageur Lookout by 2ha, which would have overlapped a small portion of historical zone H3: Recollet Falls. Thus H3 was reduced by the equal amount and location to accommodate the Visitor Centre’s footprint
- Management Plan Amendment: 2002-01 – Minor Amendment of the Plan to provide for the expansion to development zone D1: Voyageur Lookout by 2ha, which would have overlapped a small portion of historical zone H3: Recollet Falls. Thus H3 was reduced by the equal amount and location to accommodate the Visitor Centre’s footprint
- Management Plan Amendment: 2002-02 – Minor Amendment to permit Pickerel River Bridge crossing just south of Hwy. 69 river crossing in Natural Environment zone NE2
- Management Plan Amendment: 01-03 – Major amendment of the Plan to allow the French River Recreation Bridge and snowmobile trail in development zone D1

APPENDIX C - PHOTO INDEX

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French River Provincial Park



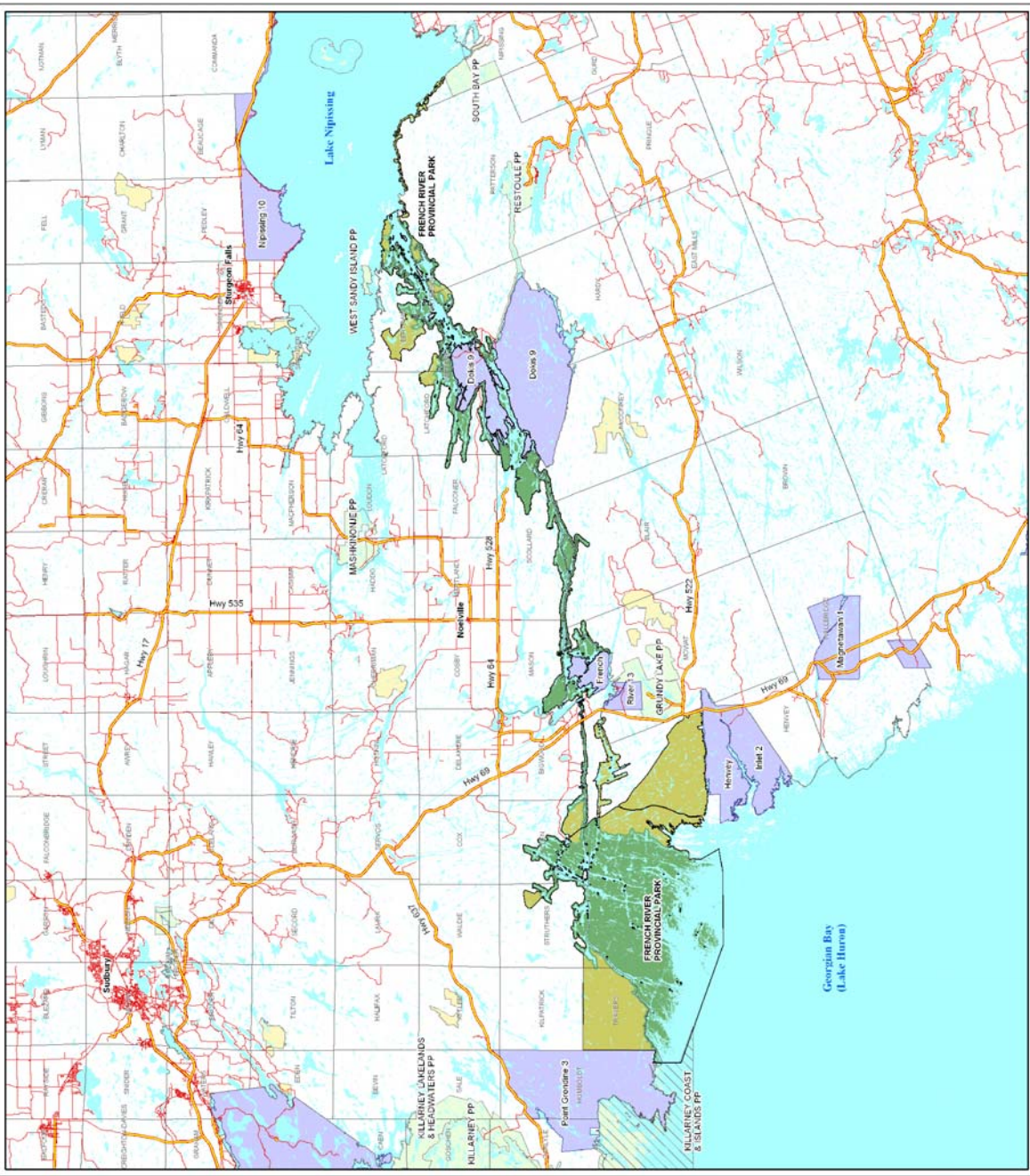
Locator Map

- Legend**
- Highway
 - Primary Road
 - Township
 - Water Area, Permanent
 - French River Provincial Park
 - Other Regulated Provincial Park
 - Proposed Provincial Park
 - Regulated Conservation Reserve
 - First Nations Reserve



Ontario

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French River Provincial Park

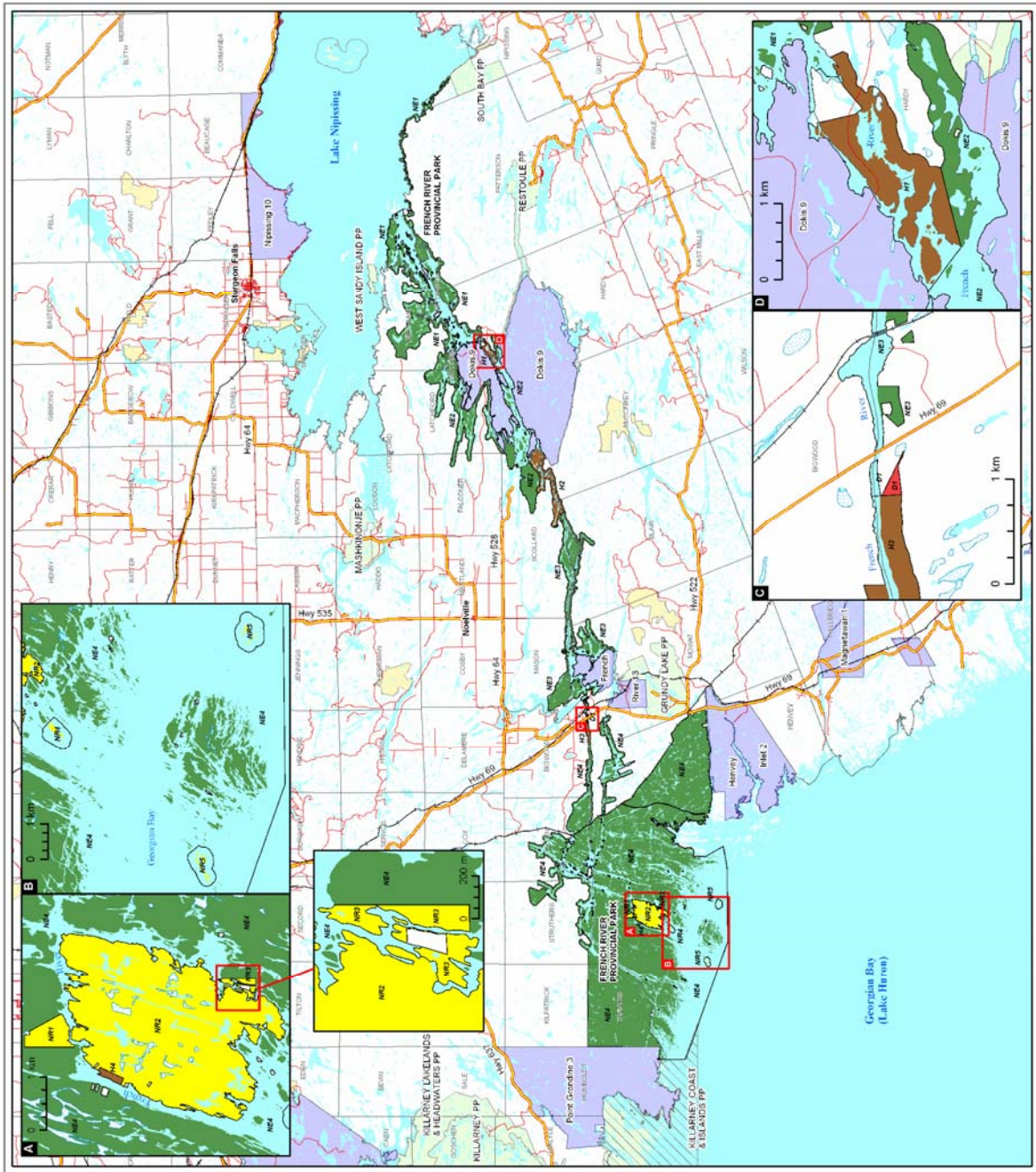


Locator Map

- Legend**
- Highway
 - Primary Road
 - Township
 - Water Area, Permanent
 - French River Provincial Park
 - French River Provincial Park (Additions)
 - Other Regulated Provincial Park
 - Proposed Provincial Park
 - Regulated Conservation Reserve
 - First Nations Reserve



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French River Provincial Park



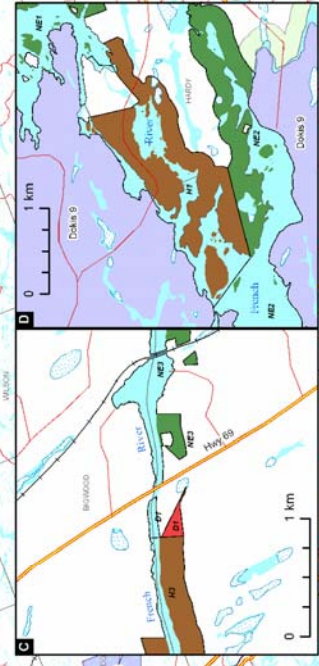
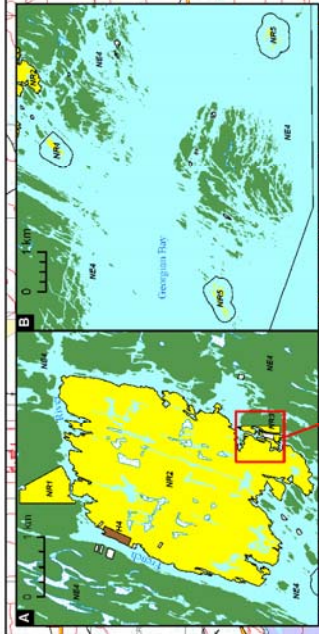
Locator Map

Legend

- Highway
- Primary Road
- Railway
- Township
- Water Area, Permanent
- Wetland Area
- French River Provincial Park
- Other Regulated Provincial Park
- Proposed Provincial Park
- Regulated Conservation Reserve
- First Nations Reserve
- Zoning - Natural Environment Zone
- Zoning - Nature Reserve Zone
- Zoning - Historical Zone
- Zoning - Development Zone



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 Base Derived From: MN025 (Natural Resources Values Information System)
 Produced by: Ontario Parks Northeast Zone



French River Provincial Park



Locator Map

Legend

- Highway
- Primary Road
- Township
- Water Area, Permanent
- French River Provincial Park
- Other Regulated Provincial Park
- Proposed Provincial Park
- Regulated Conservation Reserve
- First Nations Reserve
- Tertiary Watershed
- Dam



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 locations of features, nor as a guide to navigation.
 Projection: UTM, Zone 17
 Datum: North American Datum 1983
 Produced by: Ontario Parks Information System
 Produced by: Ontario Parks Fourteenth Zone

French River Provincial Park - Watersheds & Dams

