

Wilderness...

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irreplaceable. Even wilderness parks, a type allowing minimal development, pose no threat to industry interests. For instance, opponents of the Lady Evelyn proposal claim it would shut down the local lumber mill. But a Ministry study shows that mill output might be lowered by 5 per cent and that calculation does not account for the offsetting benefits a wilderness park could bring through tourism and the protection of wildlife habitat.

Common sense alone suggests that the current slump in forestry and mining owes nothing to parks and that abandoning the achievement of parks objectives will not guarantee any measure of economic security or growth. Furthermore, parks planners have carefully bypassed areas of significant resource potential in selecting the proposed parks and the 5 per cent of Ontario which they cover. Instead, the forest industry for example, faces supply problems because it abandons an area the size of one wilderness park every year in Ontario through professional neglect.

Secondly, wilderness parks in particular, embody a recognition of the need for economic development which respects natural limits - before the resource base is depleted and Ontario's natural heritage is lost for all time. For this reason more than any other, wilderness is opposed by those who benefit directly from development which depends on a continually expanding land base.

Other non-industrial uses such as traplines and fly-in tourist camps also suffer from this type of development.

Wilderness parks receive so much more attention than these uses however, because of their emphasis on protection and their formal boundaries. They directly challenge the sustainability of resource development in a way which can't be sidestepped by fuzzy policies of multiple use. Wilderness parks provide a fair measure of the stability and maturity of a modern economy.

Many efforts have been made in and outside the Ministry to rebuff this challenge by branding parks as the threat to economic security and parks advocates as an insensitive minority. The fact is, whatever divisions exist between the various non-industrial users of Crown land, they are over-ridden by a common concern for an approach to development which values the future. The early hearings of the Royal Commission on the Northern Environment made this fact abundantly clear. The call of most speakers was for an end to the cut-and-run exploitation of the resource base and the achievement of adequate environmental safeguards. Greater emphasis in government policy on smaller scale resource extraction, the development of secondary industry and especially the enhancement of the non-industrial economy focused on tourism, was recommended.

These sentiments appeared again in the Thunder Bay and Timmins meetings Alan Pope recently held. If there was a clear dividing line between speakers it separated industry and non-industry interests. It did not isolate parks supporters from all others.

Mr. Pope has defined

a unique opportunity to reserve some of Ontario's wilderness heritage, an opportunity which carries great responsibility since it will disappear with his generation. He has the mandate to shift priorities within the Ministry. The land use planning program is an appropriate mechanism for doing so, and the urgent starting point is to draw the line on the destruction of wilderness by designating the proposed wilderness parks.

I wish to thank the people of Terrace Bay and Schreiber and Area for the privilege of allowing me to care for them for the past years. I wish you all well. Special thanks to those who befriended us and helped us since our move here in 1975.

Sincerely,
Helen & Blair Croll

THANK YOU

We would like to thank the members of The Schreiber Fire Department for responding to our call so quickly. Their prompt and precise response saved our home. Special thanks goes out to Ed & Cathy Borutski & Harry Prescott for their help. We are very fortunate to have such helpful Neighbours & Families.

Michael & Tanny Mineau

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