

# Changes to Trees Act proposed

## Snowmobile Trail funded \$14-million

The dream of a trans-Ontario snowmobile trail network will become reality with a jobsOntarioCapital investment of \$14-million towards a Snowmobile Trail Rehabilitation and Construction (SNO-TRAC).

Northern Development and Mines Minister Shelley Martel and Tourism and Recreation Minister Peter North made the announcement Saturday, Sept. 12, at the annual convention of the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) in Kitchener.

"Today is the dawn of a great, new era for the sport of snowmobiling in Ontario," Martel said. "SNO-TRAC will provide a safe, controlled environment for riders. Trail development will create more than 1,000 jobs."

Working with Ontario's snowmobile clubs and the Ministries of Northern Development and Mines, Tourism and Recreation, Natural Resources, and Environment, SNO-TRAC will develop 3,700 kilometres of new trails and upgrade more than 4,000 kilometres of existing trails. Ultimately, an 11,000-kilometre corridor will be created for snowmobilers in Ontario.

"This initiative will help tourist resorts in Ontario become year-round businesses," Martel added. "We will establish ourselves as the world leader in snowmobile trails and provide riders with some of their most unforgettable snowmobiling experiences."

With more than 165,000 OFSC members and other snowmobilers in Ontario, the economic impact after the first year of SNO-TRAC is an estimated \$10 million. That figure is expected to triple by 1997 with almost 60 per cent of revenues coming from American riders.

"Our projections show that this funding will have an estimated economic impact of \$10 million after the first year of SNO-TRAC and some \$35 million within five years by increasing tourism expenditures by both Ontario and visiting snowmobilers," North said. "In addition to the economic benefits, SNO-TRAC will make snowmobiling safer and accessible to more people, especially families."

"The sport of snowmobiling has grown to become an important contributor to the livelihood of Ontario's tourism industry," said OFSC President Don Lumley. "This provincial

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members of the Thunder Bay Municipal League, last Saturday.

The first Trees Act was passed in 1946, said Day. Described as "enabling legislation" the Trees Act allows local governments to pass by-laws concerning private forest lands.

The first municipal by-law was passed in 1947, and 22 communities have since passed

by-laws under the Trees Act Day said.

The enabling legislation will give people a "stronger say" in the healthy management of the forest ecosystems Day said.

In making the amendments to the Trees Act, he added that the provincial government has heard public input into the matter. "The consultation period was to end in June but it has been extended to Sept. 30."

Day added that the major concern people have is their private property rights. "The forests are important to everyone."

The forestry industry generates \$600 million to the economy and provides employment to 23,000 people he said.

"They also contribute to healthy soil, water and air," said Day.

The Trees By-law committee has identified problems with the current act.

"They identify too many exceptions or loopholes," he said. "They (the by-laws) weren't very effective."

Day added the committee is looking at a stronger fine. "The current fine of \$5,000 is just not a deterrent."

"This is an enabling legislation though. The by-law is passed only if the municipality decides it is necessary."

## Province releases land use guidelines

Municipal Affairs Minister David Cooke has released a document entitled Provincial Growth and Settlement Policies Guidelines as part of the Ontario government's attempts at economic renewal.

In releasing the guidelines, Cooke said they were the government's current thinking and existing practices on land use planning.

"For the first time, policies and objectives have been brought together in one document so that municipalities seeking provincial land-use planning approval will know what the requirements are before applying," Cooke is quoted as saying.

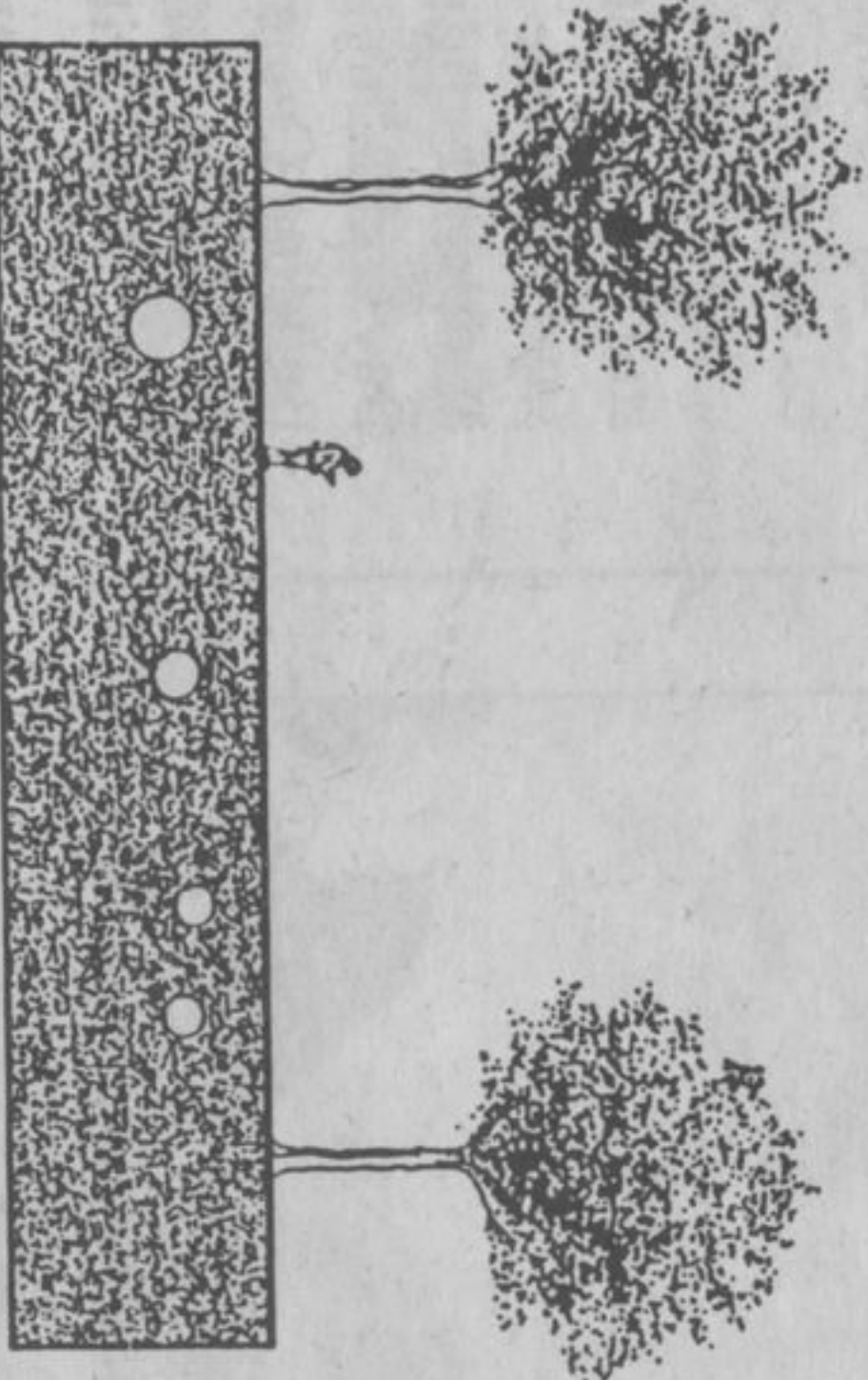
He also said that until now, the Ministry has relied on unwritten rules and internal documents when reviewing or approving land use plans.

"These guidelines will lead to a quicker, more consistent continued on page 7

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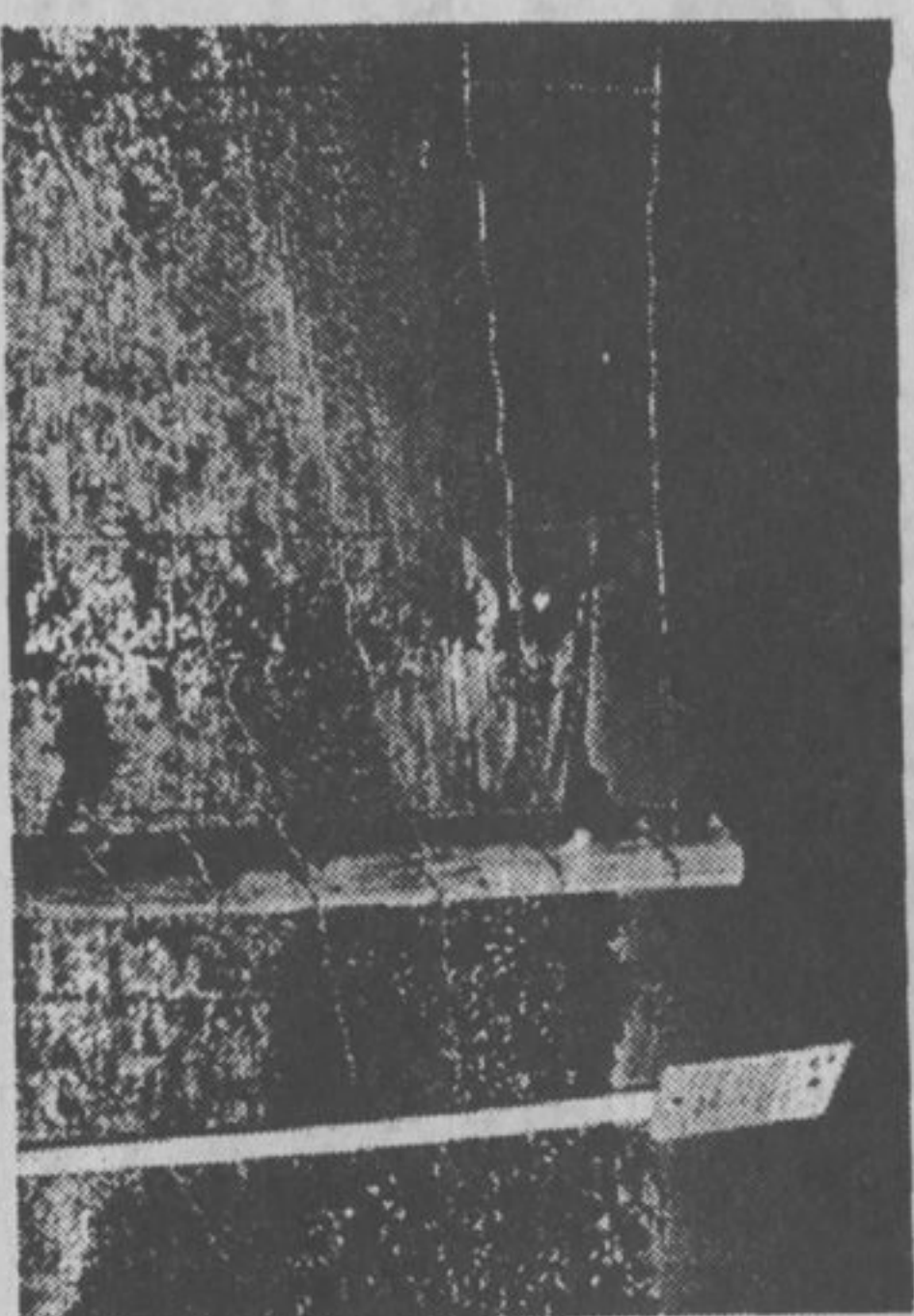
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