



FROM THE QUETICO-SUPERIOR FOUNDATION • SPRING 1992

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SPARKS FROM THE CAMPFIRE

Editor's Note: Wilderness News has received copies of several letters addressed to the Honorable Bud Wildman, Minister of Natural Resources, Toronto, Ontario and the Honorable Bob Rae, Premier of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, after the fall, 1991 Wilderness News article on proposed Quetico Park changes. Three letters follow:

Dear Mr. Wildman:

I am writing you regarding the possibility of allowing motors into sections of the Quetico Provincial Park.

I have visited the Quetico-Superior Park area many times over the past 25 years. Indeed some of my earliest outdoor memories involve that beautiful region of such solitude and quiet. Each time I go, I am forcibly reminded of the physical effort and commitment required to truly "get away from it all." That effort and the rewards of privacy and silence are truly achievable in so few places in this world. It would be a crime to open the Quetico waters to anyone with a motor boat but no gumption to work for the rewards. The sound of the motor pollutes the air for miles around and cheapens the experience for all.

I would support any program which allows access to those very few so physically handicapped that they never could hope to experience the wilderness without the aid of mechanical means. They would need to pres-

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PROPOSED QUETICO PARK CHANGES

The fall, 1991 issue of *Wilderness News* featured an article which described the opening of three new lakes within Quetico Park to 10 horsepower motorboat use for Lac La Croix Indian Band members. The lakes were opened in June, 1991. In January, 1992 the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources released a proposed amendment to the Quetico Provincial Park Management Plan. The amendment, drafted by the Lac La Croix Indian Band, would open to 10 horsepower motor use: Sturgeon Lake, Russell Lake, Fred Lake and the Maligne River. In addition, a float plane landing and boat cache on the east end of Sturgeon Lake would be allowed. On a rotating basis the Band would relinquish current motorized access to lakes in the northwestern corner of the park: Beaverhouse, Quetico, Cirrus, Jean and Conk Lakes. The opening and closing of the lakes to motorized use would rotate every four years.

The proposal to open new lakes to motorized use has not been welcomed by environmentalists. Environmental organizations believe that motors will destroy the wilderness. The new lakes are positioned in the heart of Quetico. The organizations believe the plan will negatively impact canoe routes, both from the north and the south. Environmentalists also point out that the requested change shows no termination date and might be extended indefinitely into the future. Finally, the requested amendment contains



Lac La Croix Chief Leon Jourdain.

Photo by Kevin Proescholdt

no limits on the number of motorboats or float plane flights. It is difficult to predict what usage level might develop above presently foreseen usage.

The Lac La Croix First Nation published their recommendations in a paper titled "The Lac La Croix Story." Recommendations are divided into a short term and long term recommendations. A reprint of "The Lac La Croix Story" follows, with the permission of The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. All photographs are courtesy of Kevin Proescholdt, Executive Director of Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness organization.

Letters continued

ent strong proofs, and be identified in some way so all campers could understand why they violate the silence of the Quetico.

Finally, under no circumstances should those who would profit by the use of motors be allowed in. Surely there are some places in this world safe from the power of the almighty buck!

So, please, no motors, no fly-ins, not by natives, Indians, whites, or anyone else.

Please, one quiet place.

Stephen Quinn
Minneapolis, MN

continued

'WE DO NOT WISH TO FOREVER BE THE EXCEPTION IN QUETICO PARK'

Lac La Croix First Nation has, through a process of community consultation, formed positions which are the basis of the following recommendations to the Minister of Natural Resources. These recommendations are brought forward in the hope that the Quetico Park Management Plan will be amended to incorporate them.

It has become obvious as we have prepared for this process and discussed the issues involved with our community members, Ministry of Natural Resources personnel, Parks Council members and members of other groups with interest in Quetico Provincial Park that a new relationship between our community and Quetico Park is required. We need to state clearly that as a community we support the preservation of the many Parks around us. Our belief system and lifestyle are, for the most part, consistent with the objectives of the park. However, we must also think about livelihoods for our people. As well, we wish to ensure that our children have the freedom to enjoy the remnants of a lifestyle that has for the most part been taken away. We are attempting to ensure that our children and their children will have real choices to make and real control over their own destinies. Unfortunately, their parents and grandparents had many changes foisted upon them without the benefit of choice.

We do not wish to forever be the "exception" in Quetico Park. We firmly believe that our rights have not been respected by the Government of Ontario. However, we do not wish to disrespect others simply because we have been disrespected, that is not our way. We believe, in light of recent cases tried before the Canadian courts which have defined our Treaty Rights, that we are legally able to exercise our hunting, fishing and gathering rights under Treaty #3 in Quetico Provincial Park.

Out of respect for the integrity of Quetico Park, and for its visitors, the citizens of Lac La Croix have agreed not to exercise their Treaty Rights of hunting, fishing and gathering, between May and mid-September, of each year. However, we envision the short term recommendations in the proposal presented below as a necessary alternative to those rights. They are needed measures to alleviate immediate concerns.

We recognize that many will find these recommendations disturbing. We also recognize that unless something creative is done to ensure our people again become part of the fabric of our traditional lands then this situation will continue to arise as it has in the not too distant past.



Photo by Kevin Proescholdt

We have, therefore, included some long-term recommendations for discussion. We believe that these long-term recommendations can restore the relationship of the people of Lac La Croix to Quetico Park while enhancing the quality of the Quetico Park experience. Obviously, the long-term recommendations we are making would take some

A view of part of the Lac La Croix Community in February 1992.

time to implement successfully. We believe that, over time, these initiatives would be successful in eliminating activities which are currently inconsistent with the objectives of Quetico Park.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

CONSERVATION POLICIES, ROTATING LAKE CYCLE KEY PARTS OF GUIDING STRATEGY

GUIDING

1. Exemption to the motor ban on Quetico Park Lakes for the purpose of guiding:

Lac La Croix First Nation proposes that members of the Lac La Croix Guides Association should be given an exemption for the purpose of guiding sport fishermen to the motor boat ban in Quetico Provincial Park within the following limitations and regulations:

a. Motors on the lakes and waterways named below with the exception of the waters of Wegwagum Bay should be limited to 10 horsepower.

b. Barbless hooks only shall be used while fishing the lakes and waterways named below.

c. A catch and release program shall be strictly followed by guides fishing in the lakes and waterways named below. This catch and release program shall be in effect after 12 noon of each day to facilitate the provision of a shore lunch.

d. Members of the Lac La Croix Guides

Association guiding on the lakes and waterways named below will voluntarily record the fish caught in these lakes and waterways as instructed by the Ministry of Natural Resources. It is hoped this record will provide a continuous monitoring of fish stocks in the lakes and waterways being fished.

e. It is proposed that members of the Lac La Croix Guides Association be given exemptions to lakes on a rotation basis as described in Figure 1 below.

Lac La Croix First Nation is recommending rotating on a four year cycle between two groups of lakes. This rotation will provide our guides an exemption to a greater number of lakes as per the First Nations request of May, 1991 while ensuring that fish stocks and lakes involved remain unaffected.

It should be noted that the first year (1992-93) of the proposed rotation remains basically the same as the current exemption

continued

LAC LA CROIX FIRST NATION PROFILE

Population, Employment & Income

POPULATION

Lac La Croix is the home of 278 Ojibwa people. The population's demographic makeup is as follows:

Age	Total	Male	Female	Age	Total	Male	Female
18 & under - On Reserve	113	59	54	51-60 - On Reserve	9	5	4
18 & under - Off Reserve	6	2	4	51-60 - Off Reserve	Nil	Nil	Nil
18-30 - On Reserve	71	43	28	61 & up - On Reserve	14	5	9
18-30 - Off Reserve	5	2	3	61 & up - Off Reserve	3	1	2
31-40 - On Reserve	26	14	12	TOTALS	278	150	128
31-40 - Off Reserve	8	4	4				
41-50 - On Reserve	21	13	8	TOTAL ON RESERVE	254	139	115
41-50 - Off Reserve	2	2	Nil	TOTAL OFF RESERVE	24	11	13

SOURCES OF INCOME

Sources of Income	Number Employed	
	Full Time	Seasonal/ Part Time
Lac La Croix Band	20	6.5
Ontario Provincial Police	2	
Min. of Natural Resources		7
Guiding		21
Resort Staff		13
Trapping		20
General Store	1	1
Video Rental Store		1
Hamburger Stand		1
TOTAL	23	70.5

Those individuals employed on a part-time basis work less than five months of the year.

The average income earned from employment is slightly less than \$11,500 per annum.

Unemployment rates for those people between the ages of 18 and 60 are:

Summer 26% Winter 82%

Total community income earned from Welfare and Unemployment Insurance is nearly half of the income earned from employment.

ANALYSIS OF INCOME EARNED

Age Group	% of Population	% of Community Income
Over 30	24	83
18 - 30	28	16

The under 18 age group represents 43% of the community population. The age group between ages 18 and 30, inclusive, represents an additional 28% of the community. These two groups, who make up 71% of the total population, are severely underemployed. There are few opportunities on the horizon. **These age groups are of great concern to the First Nation with regard to employment.**

Letters *continued*

The Honorable Bob Rae:

I recently read in the fall issue of Wilderness News that a certain area of Quetico Park is possibly being opened for motorboat use by the Lac La Croix Indian Band. This greatly disturbs and saddens me. It bewilders me to think that this is even being considered.

I have been "voyaging" in Quetico Park for the past 18 years. For the last 12 of them I have been guiding groups of people through this wilderness. Through these trips, many city people have learned about the importance of nature and our vanishing wilderness. I am proud to say that I have never left a dirty campsite and many times

have taken time out to clean up a disgraceful campsite (often times left dirty by inconsiderate motorboat fishermen in the Boundary Waters). Should I start to schedule my trips, planning to take valuable time to clean-up after these new lazy fishermen in Quetico? Should I develop a taste for gasoline in my water?

One of my deepest wishes is to someday take my own children to Quetico Park. I want them to experience a clean wilderness, as I did. I want them to understand peace and solitude. No cars, no motorboats, no planes. Clean, unpolluted water. Is this to be taken away from them? From us all?

Yes, you can say that this is only a small section of the park, and that I am being overly dramatic. But wasn't that the same reasoning for the first "invasion" into Quetico Lake and Beaverhouse Lake by motor-

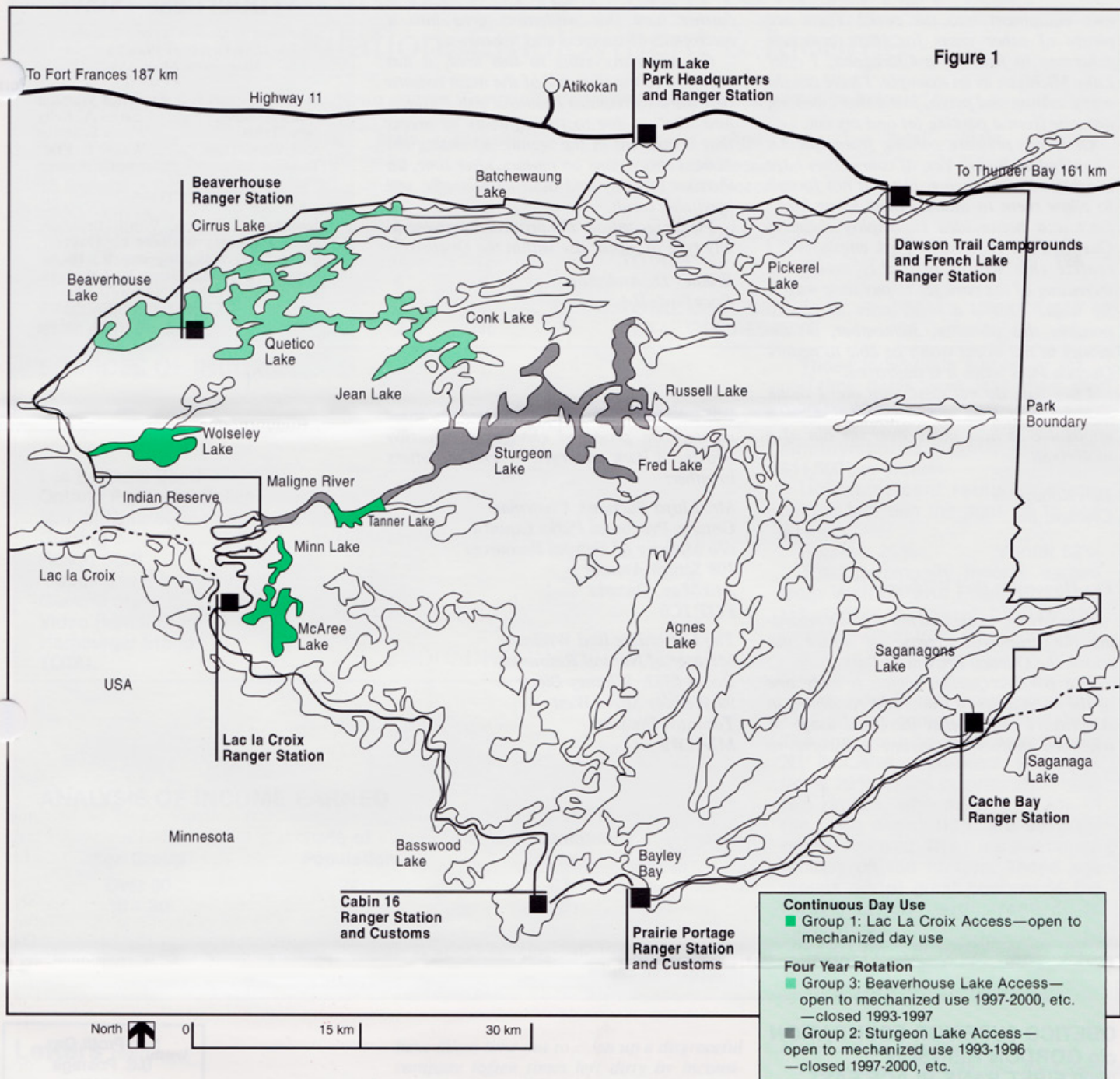
boats? Where does this end?

I have always thought that the Canadian Government was very wise in their strict regulations over Quetico Park. I truly believed that they clearly understood the extreme importance of a wilderness area like Quetico Park. As a citizen of the United States, I often wished that our government could develop and protect such areas. I thought the Canadian Government realized that if given away, this park, as such, can never be again. Was this just foolish assumption on my part?

Where is the pressure coming from? Surely the Canadian Government would not offer up the park on their own. Is the pressure from some inconsiderate fishermen, who are too lazy to paddle and portage their

continued

LAC LA CROIX 1ST NATION GUIDING PROPOSAL



Recommendations *continued*

order. This year will provide sufficient time for all parties involved to adjust to the proposed changes.

It is proposed that after the year 2000 this alternating of lakes be continued as per the proposal above until such time as long-term initiatives have produced viable long-term alternatives.

The existing motor boat exemption for boats of unlimited horsepower to members of the Lac La Croix Guides Association on Wegwagum Bay would remain in effect at all times.

TRAPPING

a. That the ban on the creation of new traplines in Quetico Provincial Park be lifted.

b. That members of Lac La Croix First Nation have exclusive trapline transfer rights within Quetico Provincial Park.

c. That the trapping species limitation to beaver and marten be lifted.

d. That a trapping management body including membership from Lac La Croix First Nation and the Ministry of Natural Resources be immediately implemented to manage the trapping resources in Quetico Provincial Park as well as First Nation members traplines located outside of Que-

tico Park. The management body would be responsible for making input to all appropriate plans as they affect trapping activities by the First Nation.

e. That new trap lines be created, particularly in the Hunters Island area, to meet the immediate needs of Lac La Croix First Nation and that trapping cabins continue to be built to serve these new and existing lines. Cabins will conform to the existing guidelines.

f. That trapping quotas be established by the management body referred to in section d. above in consultation with trapline holders and further that there should continue to be no penalties imposed for undertrapping.

FIGURE 1—EXEMPTED LAKES PROPOSED BY LAC LA CROIX FIRST NATION

	1992-1993	1993-1996	1997-2000
Motor boat use: up to 10 h.p. by members of Lac La Croix Guides Assoc.	Beaverhouse Lake, Quetico Lake, Cirrus Lake, Conk Lake, Jean Lake, Wolseley Lake, Minn Lake, McAree Lake, Tanner Lake, Maligne River from Lac La Croix to Tanner Lake	Wolseley Lake, Tanner Lake, Minn Lake, McAree Lake, Sturgeon Lake, Little Sturgeon (Upper Stur- geon) Lake, Fred Lake, Russell Lake, Maligne River from Lac La Croix to Sturgeon Lake	Beaverhouse Lake, Quetico Lake, Cirrus Lake, Conk Lake, Jean Lake, Wolseley Lake, Minn Lake, McAree Lake, Tanner Lake, Maligne River from Lac La Croix to Tanner Lake
Day Use	Beaverhouse, Quetico, Conk, Wolseley, Minn, McAree, Tanner	Wolseley, Tanner, Minn, McAree	Beaverhouse, Quetico, Conk, Wolseley, Minn, McAree, Tanner
Day use & over- night camping (2 night limit)	Cirrus, Jean	Sturgeon, Little Sturgeon, Fred, Russell	Cirrus, Jean
Aircraft Landing Location	Beaverhouse	East end of Sturgeon	Beaverhouse
Boat cache	Beaverhouse	East end of Sturgeon	Beaverhouse

BOATS OF UNLIMITED HORSEPOWER ON WATERS OF WEGWAGUM BAY.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

LAC LA CROIX'S INTEGRAL ROLE, EMPLOYMENT NEEDS MUST BE REFLECTED IN PARK PLAN



Photo by Kevin Proescholdt

Helen Greshick (left), Quetico Park Historian Shirley Peruniak, and Marie Ottetail (right) at the Lac La Croix Village, February 1992.

A concerted effort must be made to begin finding and offering long-term positive alternatives to the citizens of Lac La Croix First Nation. These long-term alternatives need to be consistent with and part of the overall objectives of Quetico Provincial Park and developed to meet the needs of the people of Lac La Croix First Nation and the needs

of other users of the park. It is recommended that:

The objectives and management plan for Quetico Provincial Park be amended to include the Ojibwa citizens of Lac La Croix First Nation as an integral part of the fabric of Quetico Provincial Park.

A concerted effort be made and a long-term process established to create long-term employment opportunities for Lac La Croix First Nation citizens within the programs, maintenance and management of Quetico Provincial Park.

A committee be established made up of representatives from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Lac La Croix First Nation to begin developing recommendations to the Minister of Natural Resources for the implementation of the above.

Specific initiatives which have been discussed to date to achieve the objectives above include the following:

1. Development of an interpretive program for Quetico Park specifically geared to providing the Ojibwa perspective to Park visitors. We envision this program to be staffed by Ojibwa people. An interpretive

program of this nature would be a unique opportunity for Quetico Provincial Park, the park users and the citizens of Lac La Croix First Nation.

The interpretive program could be coordinated with the activities of a Cultural/Healing Centre located at Lac La Croix. The Cultural/Healing Centre is envisioned as a Centre to firstly, provide programming for Aboriginal people and, secondly, begin sharing cultural understanding with non-Aboriginal people.

2. Greater involvement of Lac La Croix First Nation in the management, planning and operations of Quetico Park. This involvement could be enhanced by creating a work centre on the Lac La Croix Reserve.

3. The establishment of youth camps and training program to introduce and prepare Lac La Croix's young people to take part in employment opportunities in Quetico Park and in other potential employment areas.

These camps and programs could begin introducing and preparing young people for non-motorized guiding opportunities in Quetico Park.

4. The establishment of a Quetico entry station on the Lac La Croix Reserve. The entry station could provide campground facilities designed for the wilderness enthusiast.

Letters *continued*

own equipment into the park? There are plenty of other areas for these armchair fishermen to fish. As a Chicagoan, I offer Lake Michigan as an example. I have caught many salmon and perch, just a short walking distance from a parking lot and my car.

Or is the pressure coming from Lac La Croix Indian Band? Yes, of course they have a right to make a living, but is it not foolish to allow them to destroy their home land? Isn't it a better idea to employ them as Quetico Park Rangers or Park employees? I realize this would probably mean the increasing of the park fee to pay their wages. So what? This is a small price to pay to preserve this paradise. Remember, all the money in the world won't be able to restore Quetico Park when it is destroyed.

I beg you, do not dissappoint me. I thank you for your time and consideration. It is impossible to hear peace over the din of a motorboat.

Dan Kobayashi
Chicago, Ill.

The Honorable Bud Wildman:

I am writing to express my opinion regarding the proposed increase of motor use within the Quetico Provincial Park.

The BWCA/Quetico region is truly one of the finest areas of wilderness remaining in America. I believe that increased usage of outboard motors by anyone will serve to

further turn this wilderness area into a metropolis of campers and fishermen.

On my many visits to this area, it has occurred to me that one of the main reasons that the area remains beautiful and "wilderness like" is due to the difficulty of access that is inherent in the region. By easing the current restrictions on motors, over time, an increase in noisy and destructive traffic will inevitably result.

Please reconsider the proposed increase in any type of motor use within the Quetico.

Bradley D. Anderson
Rockford, ILL.

Editors Note: Persons interested in commenting on proposed changes to Quetico Provincial Park are urged to send the letters to either:

Mr. Lloyd Burrridge, Chairman
Ontario Provincial Parks Council
c/o Ministry of Natural Resources
108 Saturn Avenue
Atikokan, Ontario
POT 1C0

The Honorable Bud Wildman
Minister of Natural Resources
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Wilderness News

Published by Quetico-Superior Foundation
2200 First Bank Place East
Minneapolis, Minn. 55402

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