



PEACEFUL
PARKS
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - May 11, 2006

Ontario To Expand Cormorant Cull At Presqu'ile Provincial Park

Toronto: Thursday, May 11, 2006: All evidence points to an expanded cormorant culling program at Presqu'ile Provincial Park near Belleville, Ontario until 2007, including shooting birds during the fall migration. This year was originally intended as the last year in a three year culling program.

Minister of Natural Resources David Ramsay has delayed making an announcement most likely because he is waiting for his legal team to clear the way to expand the cull without public consultations.

Here's what we know:

On Friday May 5, 2006 The Ministry of the Environment approved an amendment to the waste disposal site at High Bluff Island at Presqu'ile Provincial Park where dead cormorants shot by park officials are buried. The exact amendment reads as follows:

The following Condition 29 is hereby added to read as follows:

29. No waste may be received at this Site after November 1, 2007

According to the Certificate of Approval, Ontario Parks must bury all dead birds within 24 hours of being killed. Therefore, Condition 29 allows for the killing of birds up until November 1, 2007. The waterfowl hunt on High Bluff Island does not begin until after November 1 of each year.

The new amendment also expands the maximum capacity of the waste disposal site, from 15 tons to 140 cubic metres. The initial amendment was to increase the maximum storage capacity to 35 tons, but by switching to cubic metres Ontario Parks can add as much filler as needed to dilute contaminants found in the birds.

Last year, Ontario Parks was required to remove the waste from High Bluff Island to a municipal landfill because it exceeded acceptable levels of mercury and selenium for compost material. Diluting the waste is a "sneaky" way to ensure contamination levels do not exceed acceptable levels.

By expanding the capacity of the waste disposal site, Ontario Parks avoids any further tests measuring contaminants. Ontario Parks is not required to test the waste pile until it reaches its maximum capacity and the waste must be removed.

"It's just pathetic. The Ministry responsible to ensure no pollutants escape into the environment approves a plan so another Ministry can escape public scrutiny and accountability," says AnnaMaria Valastro of the Peaceful Parks Coalition.

Ontario Parks has already begun to oil the eggs of ground nesting birds. By oiling eggs before shooting begins, park officials drive ground nesting birds into the trees where they will eventually be shot.

press release

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On Friday May 12, members of Cormorant Defenders International and their legal representative Clayton Ruby are meeting with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and Ontario Parks to discuss how the police intend to uphold and protect the civil rights of observes intending to film, for the purpose of information dissemination, the shooting of nesting cormorants.

It is highly anticipated that Minister David Ramsay will publicly announce his intention to expand the cull at Presqu'île immediately after this meeting.

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Note To The Editor:

Cormorant Defenders International has established s daily "blog" of the activities at Presqu'île Provincial Parks. For updates, please link to: www.cormorants.ca

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