



PEACEFUL
PARKS
COALITION

For Immediate Release - March 14, 2006

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources: Ministry of No Results

Toronto, Tuesday March 14 2006: The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has commissioned another "scientific" review of their controversial cull of Double-crested Cormorants at Presqu'ile Provincial Park, near Belleville, Ontario. The final recommendation is another year of shooting.

The report written by David Moore, Chip Weseloh and Richard Joos concludes that shooting thousands of nesting cormorants has minimal impact on Great Blue Herons. Great Blue Herons nest among cormorants. The report even suggests that shooting benefits the great blues. Conversely, the report concludes that the presence of protesters floating in boats, canoes and kayaks are detrimental to nesting birds and must be removed.

"We simply cannot tolerate this sort bias and political research any longer," says AnnaMaria Valastro of the Peaceful Parks Coalition (PPC). "The same people doing this so-called research are the same people advocating the shooting. It is not surprising that independent academic research does not support their findings."

Anticipating yet another ringing endorsement of their own culling program at Presqu'ile, PPC conducted a search of field records through Freedom of Information. "Not only is their report riddled with statistical and mathematical errors, internal records suggests they are taking sweeping liberties with the interpretation of their own data," says Valastro.

Internal records show there are two distinct cormorant/great blue heron colonies at Presqu'ile. Shooting was primarily concentrated in one colony over the other. Great Blue Herons had much greater nest failure rates and lower fledging rates in areas where shooting was concentrated. This data was omitted from the final report.

Records also show that the fledging rate for Great Blue Herons for all nests (failed and successful combined) has been consistently below average since cormorant management began at Presqu'ile. If this continues, it is questionable whether the population of herons can sustain itself over time.

"Since the Ministry has been managing this bird sanctuary, it has been a total disaster. They are misfits in the world of ecological science and should be barred from further involvement in this program".

For more information, please contact:

AnnaMaria Valastro at 416.785.8636 or email ppc@peacefulparks.org Copies of all records and including the Moore, Wesekoh and Joos report are available upon request.

press release

PO Box 326, Station B,
Toronto, Ontario
Canada, M5T 2W2

T: 877 785 8636

W: www.peacefulparks.org

E: ppc@peacefulparks.org



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Note To The Editor:

Documents released through Freedom of Information also relate to the cull that occurred on Rice Lake by private landowners in the spring of 2005.

Internal records suggest the Rice Lake Tourist Association (RLTA) organized a campaign to encourage landowners to kill nesting cormorants on private islands. Internal emails suggest the RLTA organized agents and got permission from landowners to enter their property.

The Rice Lake Tourist Association consists primarily of recreational angling outfitters. "It is illegal under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act for private landowners to kill cormorants over fisheries. Internal records confirm that the Minister of Natural Resources David Ramsay was thoroughly briefed on the Rice Lake situation.

Internal emails confirm Ministry staff deliberately provided false information regarding the cull on Rice Lake to enquiring members of the public.

All requests regarding Double-crested Cormorants made through the Freedom of Information Act need Cabinet approval.

All records are available upon request.

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