

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPONENT: Department of Natural Resources
PROPOSAL NAME: Hecla North Shore Cottage Subdivision
CLASS OF DEVELOPMENT: 2
TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT: Recreation
CLIENT FILE NO. 4253.00

OVERVIEW:

The Proposal was dated May 23, 1997 and was received on May 27, 1997. The advertisement of the Proposal read as follows:

"A Proposal filed by the Department of Natural Resources Parks Branch to develop a road accessible 60 to 65 lot cottage subdivision located on the lakeshore at the north end of Hecla Island on parts of sections 22, 23, and 26 in Township 25, Range 6 East in Hecla/Grindstone Provincial Park. The development will occupy approximately 2 km. of the north shore of Hecla Island, from immediately east of the existing cabin rentals and campground to the west side of the natural lagoon south of the abandoned West Quarry fishing station. Cottage lots are scheduled to be available for release in October 1997."

The Proposal was advertised in the Gimli/Arborg Interlake Spectator on Monday, June 9, 1997 and the Winnipeg Free Press on Saturday, June 7, 1997. Copies of the Proposal were placed in the public registry at 123 Main Street Library, the Manitoba Eco-Network, the Centennial Public Library, the Selkirk Community Library and the Rural Municipality of Bifrost Office. It was also distributed to the "Recreation" TAC members for comment. All comments were requested by June 30, 1997.

A Public Open House was hosted by Parks Branch in Riverton on June 24, 1997. Comments were provided to Environment on forms distributed by Parks Branch at the open house.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC IN RESPONSE TO THE ENVIRONMENT ACT ADVERTISEMENT

Harvey Williams
President
T.R.E.E.
25 St. Pierre Street

- letter dated June 18, 1997.
- request public hearings on the basis that the development will have significant environmental impacts including:

- destruction of habitat for wildlife such as moose and neotropical bird migrants,
- reduction of Hecla Island's biodiversity,
- destruction of the natural ecosystem and inappropriate activity in intensive recreational zoned areas in parks.

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- areas of Hecla Island that are recovering from human disturbance should be protected including the area of the proposed subdivision.

Kim Monson
 President
 Manitoba Naturalists Society
 Room 401- 63 Albert Street
 Winnipeg, MB. R3B 1G4

- letter dated June 25, 1997.
- request that a CEC hearing be held for the following reasons:
 - the public are entitled to an explanation of the precedent created for cottage development within the Recreational Land Use Category in Hecla Provincial Park as this development represents the first extension of cottaging within the revised Parks Act and Regulations.
 - the sustainability of the development should be addressed in detail to ensure that the capital and operational costs represent an appropriate allocation of provincial funds.
 - access to the shoreline by the public at large will be prevented by the subdivision.
 - the biophysical and heritage impacts have not been documented.
 - the development appears to contradict the government philosophy which lead to the creation of Hecla Provincial Park and the concentration of cottages on Grindstone Point.
 - due to the wider interest in the development it is important that public hearings be held in Winnipeg as well as locally.

Gaile Whelan Enns
Coordinator
Endangered Spaces Campaign
63 Albert Street, Suite 411
Winnipeg, MB R3B 1G4

- letter dated June 30, 1997
- in the absence of new management plan for Hecla/Grindstone Provincial Park request that fully understandable information be made available for public review including future and planned development for the park, LUC boundaries, existing and planned infrastructure, roads, existing permits or

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licences of a development nature, the biophysical study, mitigation and standards for minimum impact road construction and cottage construction that would be applied in this situation.

Roger Turenne
President
Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
Manitoba Chapter
P.O. Box 344
Winnipeg, MB. R3C 2H5

- letter dated June 30, 1997.
- request public hearings on behalf of the CPWS, Manitoba Chapter.
- note that the area is in the process of returning to its natural state and cottaging is clearly not an appropriate activity for such valuable habitat despite the intensive recreation zoning for the development area. The development will have significant environmental impacts including the destruction of wildlife habitat for moose and neotropical bird migrants. Recommend that the protection of biodiversity be addressed by MB. Environment in granting environmental licences which reflect the goals and principles of the Endangered Spaces Campaign, *Sustainable Development: A special Role*

for National, Provincial and Territorial Parks and Our Parks-Showcases for Sustainable Development.

Donna Derenchuk
249 Village Rd.
Winnipeg, MB R3T 4M7

- letter dated June 30, 1997. cc Gary Filmon and Glen Cummings.
- request that public hearings be held, and should be held at the time of the development of a new management plan for the Park.
- mention that the proposal is in direct contravention of the current management plan for Hecla which states that cottages are not to be allowed on Hecla Island and that one of the main recreational activities to be featured at Hecla is wildlife viewing. Wildlife habitat preservation and cottaging do not mix.
- the development represents an unfair and unjust use of public land because Manitoba's Provincial Parks are intended for the enjoyment of all Manitobans.

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Holly Cleator
26 Calder Bay
Winnipeg, MB R3T 5L9

- letter dated June 27, 1997.
- request that public hearings held to discuss the potential degradation of wildlife habitat as a result of the proposed subdivision.
- object to the proposal because it involves a backwards approach to park management and the loss of wildlife habitat.
- recommend that the cottage development should not proceed the development and public discussion of a new management plan for the park given the significant level of public interest in the park.

Alice Chambers
10 Burrows Road
Pinawa, MB. R0E 1L0

- letter dated June 30, 1997. cc. Glen Cummings, Jim McCrae, Gord Prouse.

- concerns regarding the proposal include the following:

- the submission of the proposal is premature in that there is insufficient information for review. Recommend that the proposal be rejected due to lack of information.

- the proposal violates the spirit and intent of the *Hecla Grindstone Provincial Parks Management Plan, 1988*. The Province is making proposals without a review of existing park management plans and is ignoring the present plan. The proposal does not mention the present management plan.

- no justification for the proposal has been given. The existing management plan provides for 507 cottage lots on Grindstone Point with provision for an additional 300. There are still 100 lots available from the 507. The long term plan for development in the Park should be part of the proposal including agreements made for the exchange of private lands for lakefront properties.

- the proposal has the potential for huge and unnecessary effects on the ecology and biodiversity of the area and the cultural, heritage and natural history. Specifically, the cumulative effects on shoreline development including road building and maintenance, trails, and other infrastructure resulting in ongoing effects on wildlife need to be addressed.

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- the proposal is inconsistent with Policy 2.4 and 3.3 of *Applying Manitoba's Natural Lands & Special Places Policies* and *Policy 2.1 of Applying Manitoba's Water Policies*. There should be full cost accounting for such development including the null alternative which is reflected in *Provincial Land Use Policies Regulation, 184/94* (Section 7 under 8. Policy Application).

- in conclusion respondent is appalled at the lack of implementation in Manitoba of commitments made to protect areas and biodiversity. The proposed

development is unjustified and is unacceptable in an area which should be offered long term protection.

E. Kim Tyson
John A. Shearer
10 Harry Collins Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2M 4N2

- letter dated June 29, 1997.
- request public hearings on the environmental impacts of the proposed cottage development, particularly the impacts on the habitat of neotropical birds and moose.
- mention that the proposed subdivision would be contrary to Manitoba's commitment to the goal of preserving biodiversity in parks as per the 1990 interprovincial accord.
- believe that provincial parks are intended for the public good and should not be devoted to the recreational pursuits of a select few.

Hugh Arklie
Box 126
Dugald, MB R0E 0K0

- letter dated July 13, 1997. *(also includes a copy of a letter sent to the Hon. Glen Cummings dated July 3, 1997, wherein similar concerns were raised.)*
- concerns include:
 - inadequate time and opportunity for the public to comment to the Environment Act Proposal and by holding only one open house locally.
 - the Province is placing itself in a conflict of interest because it is both the proponent and the approving authority for the Proposal.

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- Proposal provides insufficient information on the environmental impacts of the development.
- the Recreational LUC designation for Hecla is irrelevant. The issue should be whether or not cottaging make sense on Hecla in the first place.
- cottaging on Hecla is in violation of the 1988 Management Plan which is still in effect.
- cottage lots on Hecla are not justified when lots remain available on Grindstone Point.
- question why an Environment Act Licence is being applied for prior to the bio-physical/heritage assessment and sewage treatment information becoming available for review. The Proposal makes conclusions that the environmental impacts from the development are minimal and the socio-economic benefits positive without sufficient information to support these statements.

Curtis Grimolfson
 Box 1566
 Gimli, MB R0C 1B0

- letter to the Hon. J. Glen Cummings dated April 7, 1997.
- details the injustice felt by his family when they were forced to move off Hecla Island. Describes his efforts since that time to provide an alternate source of income for his family.
- does not want to see land on Hecla Island be offered to outsiders and would like to see it offered to ex-landowners and descendants so that their heritage can be maintained.

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COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC IN RESPONSE TO THE PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE HOSTED BY PARKS BRANCH - JUNE 24, 1997

Richard Sheridan
433 Lyndale Drive
Winnipeg, MB R3N 1M8

- received by FAX June 27, 1997.
- vehemently opposed to any cottage lot development on Hecla Island on the basis of impacts to boreal forest, birds and wildlife. The development is unwarranted and unjustifiable. Concerned about impacts from existing development, particularly from the presence of sea-doo's in the marine area. Request that the Park be left alone.

Arlene Thorarinson
Box 381
Riverton, MB R0C 2R0

- received by FAX June 26, 1997.
- suggest that original inhabitants of Hecla Island should be given first priority on the lots at minimal cost.

Sharon Paulson
Riverton, MB R0C 2R0

- received by FAX June 26, 1997.
- concerned about the size and location of the subdivision impacting wildlife, the existing trail and the forest. Mention that the historical importance of the quarry and Christine's Camp have been ignored.
- recommend that in order to increase activity in the village the subdivision should be located near the village and along the group use road. This location would minimize impacts to forests, wildlife and the trail, as well as reduce construction costs of road development and hydro servicing. This location would also give descendants an opportunity to locate in proximity to their ancestors homesteads.

Name and Address not provided

- received by FAX June 26, 1997.
- concerned about the loss of trail and shoreline and impact to wildlife and the historic quarry.

- poor location due to the rough shoreline and heavy northwinds. Suggest that an extension of the trail would make more sense.

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Name and Address not provided

- suggest that the subdivision be located on the east shore either north or south of the village in order to make it more accessible and reduce the impact on wildlife.

G. Remillard

No Address provided

- suggest that the subdivision should be restricted to the east and south shore where there is better lake frontage.

Hugh Arklie

Box 126 RR 2

Dugald, MB R0E 0K0

- discussion at the open house is a violation of the Management Plan for Hecla Island that was approved in 1987. The Plan is up for renewal in 1997 and it is only in the context of the Plan renewal that this "nonsense" should even be discussed.

- it is completely "stupid" to think of 60 lots on Hecla when there are still 130 lots available on Grindstone Point and when cottage lots all along the west shore of lake Winnipeg are for sale. Lakefront land should be protected.

- respondent is insulted that the open house is only being held in Riverton. Views that as an attempt to stifle dissent.

Kris Peterson

P.O. Box 4057

Arborg, MB. R0C 0A0

- suggest that the expropriated islanders should be given first consideration for cottage lots and that the next phase of cottage development be open to the public on a draw basis.

Suggest that a local board be elected to oversee this development. No commercial development should be allowed in the cottage development.

Phyllis Hobann

Box 346
Riverton, MB R0C 2R0

- suggest that Hecla descendants be given lots free of charge to offset insubstantial monies paid to expropriated landowners. No commercial development should be allowed in the cottage development.

Pat Donohoe
Peterfield, MB

- development sounds like a good idea. Pleased to hear that former residents will have preference. Would liked to keep informed of the development.

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Alan Lagimodiere
Box 276
Selkirk, MB R1A 2B2

- in favour of the development and restoring land on the island to displaced landowners. Express concern with respect to small size of lots and potential for commercial development.

Kris Gudmundson
Box 713
Arborg, MB R0C 0A0

- the site for the subdivision is one of the "stupidest" decisions the government has made with regard to Hecla Island. Only a "moron" would want a cottage along the rock strewn beach open to the north end of Lake Winnipeg. Question if the location of the next subdivision is going to be kept secret until after the "ex-Heclingers" have been appeased.

Jeff Gushulak
209-3040 Pembina Highway
Winnipeg, MB R3T 4N1
Telephone (204) 269-3475

- suggest that the development should have building restrictions/standards which will maintain resale value. Displaced islanders should be given the first opportunity for lots.

Davilyn Eyolfson
Box 180
Lundar, MB R0C 1Y0

- cottage lots should not be located on the north shore due to the fragile ecosystem. The subdivision should be located in or south of the village in order to provide easy access, swimming, boat launching, and better use of previously settled areas of the island.

Keith Eyolfson
Box 180
Lundar, MB R0C 1Y0

- suggest that south of the village provides a far better location, hydro, road access, beach, etc.

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Janie Hygaard
Box 2, Grp 166
RR 1
Selkirk, MB R1A 2A6

- family are descendants of Hecla Island landowners. Request that her family be given priority in obtaining a lot in order to regain their heritage. Request that her name be put on the list of individuals with opportunity to purchase one parcel of land.

John and Audrey Goodman
518 Manitoba Ave.
Selkirk, MB R1A 0Z2

- in favor of the development. Suggest that the lot size be increased to 1/2 acre. Would like to know the cost of a lease, salability of the cottages on leased lots and whether expropriated locals will get their lease for free.

Curtis Grimolfson
Box 1566
Gimli, MB R0C 1B0

- family are descendants of Hecla Island landowners. Request that the cottage lots be given free of charge to descendants of previous landowners of Hecla Island to offset the low values offered at the time land was expropriated. Would like the Hon. J. Glen Cummings to attend a meeting with Hecla ex- landowners and descendants to address their concerns.

TECHNICAL COMMENTS

Natural Resources

Mention that the Environment Act Proposal submitted was pre-screened by DNR prior to filing it for licencing under the Environment Act. DNR endorses licencing the project. Advise that a biophysical study of vegetation and wildlife is underway and that the studies' findings will be considered in the development of the subdivision. In addition, an engineering review of the sewage treatment options is nearing completion and will form the basis for upgrading the sewage system.

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Historic Resources

Historic Resources will examine the area of the proposed subdivision at the time the access routes are cleared to determine if significant heritage resources are present. A copy of report with the Branch findings will be provided to Environment. If significant heritage objects are present, DNR will be contacted to develop a mutually acceptable resources management strategy.

Environment (Eastern-Interlake Region) The lot size and the geology of the area limits the type of private sewage disposal system to holding tanks. Recommend that the cottage lots be developed with the provision of a local municipal type of wastewater disposal piped directly to the existing licenced wastewater treatment facility. Question if the lease agreements will stipulate that

shoreline manipulation/development cannot be undertaken by the resident.

Mines Branch	No concerns. Note that Mines Branch had pending Mining Claim applications at the proposed location.
Rural Development	No objection to the development. Note that a sewage disposal facility and its location has not been identified.
Fisheries and Oceans	Recommend that the following mitigation measures be followed to control erosion and sedimentation: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Appropriate mitigation measures as outlined in the Stream Crossing Guidelines (1996) to prevent sediment from entering Lake Winnipeg.2. Construction equipment should be refueled and serviced at least 100m away from the lake, and appropriate precautions should be taken to ensure that deleterious substances do not enter the water.3. Road side areas should be seeded as soon as possible after completion of the project.

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CCEA) Based on responses from federal departments, application of CCEA with respect to the project will not be required.

Discussion

The concerns expressed by the public in response to the Environment Act advertisement of the Proposal as well as the comments provided in response to the Riverton open house hosted by Parks Branch on June 24, 1997 are substantial. Two main issues have been identified by the respondents opposed to the cottage development. These issues require clarification:

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1. The information provided in the Proposal does not indicate that the development is being proposed in accordance with an updated park management plan for Hecla/Grindstone Provincial Park. The 1988 Hecla Management Plan prohibits cottage development on Hecla Island and concentrates cottage development on Grindstone Point. Concerns have

been raised that it is inappropriate to allow cottage development on Hecla Island without a review of the 1988 Hecla Management Plan which should include public consultation. Without clarification from Parks Branch regarding the existence of a new plan which reflects the Province's change in park management policies to allow cottage development on Hecla Island, justification for the project appears to be lacking.

2. If cottaging on Hecla Island is justified following a review of the current park management plan, public input should be solicited by the Parks Branch in determining the most appropriate location on the island for cottage subdivision(s) in order to minimize environmental impacts. The present proposal does not incorporate public opinion and does not provide sufficient information on the environmental impact associated with the development at the proposed location, nor are alternative locations discussed.

On July 22, 1997 the Director of Approvals wrote to Parks Branch requesting comments and clarification with respect to the aforementioned two issues, along with specific focus on whether the interpretation of respondents, with respect to the park management plan is correct. In addition, in the same correspondence Parks Branch was advised that a licencing decision on the proposal cannot be made until the information, in preparation to define potential environmental impacts and to clarify how wastewater will be treated and disposed of, is received and reviewed.

On July 30, 1997 Parks Branch provided a written response to the Director of Approvals. Parks Branch advised that the provisions of the 1997 Provincial Park System Plan prepared under the Provincial Parks Act supersede land use zoning in all provincial park management plans, including the 1988 Hecla Management Plan. The System Plan was developed following extensive, province wide public and stakeholder consultation from November 1995 to November 1996, including two meetings in Riverton. The System Plan was subsequently approved by Cabinet on February 26, 1997.

More specifically, the six land based zones identified in the Hecla Management Plan are now replaced by five Land Use Categories that are described in the new Provincial Park System Plan. These five land use categories are Access, Heritage, Backcountry, Resource Management, and Recreational Development. The Hecla North Shore Cottage Subdivision is located within the Recreational Development Land Use Category which provides for a range of activities on park lands, including cottaging. The Hecla Island Subdivision Proposal is consistent with the Recreational Development Land Use Category.

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Parks Branch selected the proposed development site due to its proximity to the concentration of recreational facilities including the golf course, tennis courts, marina, resort and beaches at Gull Harbour. The land was also chosen for cottage development because of its moderate slopes, positive drainage, attractive forest and shoreline.

On September 3, 1997 Parks Branch filed the following reports for review:

Reconnaissance Level Inventory of Vegetation and Bird Use on the North Shore of Hecla Island, and Hecla Provincial Park Sewage Treatment Review

Copies of the reports were filed in the Public Registries. Respondents were notified that the reports were available for review until September 24, 1997.

Conclusions and Recommendation

A Clean Environment Commission hearing on the Proposal is not recommended. The reasons not to recommend that a public hearing be held are as follows:

- 1) The development proposed is consistent with the provisions of the 1997 Provincial Park System Plan now in effect under the Provincial Parks Act;
- 2) The site selected for the cottage subdivision is located within the Recreational Development Land Use Category of the 1997 Parks System Plan which allows cottaging at the proposed location on Hecla Island;
- 3) The results of the surveys documented in the report titled *Reconnaissance Level Inventory of Vegetation and Bird Use on the North Shore of Hecla Island, August 1997* demonstrate that there are no known rare or endangered species of concern in the immediate area of the proposed subdivision;
- 4) The *Hecla Provincial Park Sewage Treatment Review Report, August 1997* report has established that the wastewater to be generated by the subdivision can be accommodated by the existing treatment system at Hecla Provincial Park; and
- 5) A Heritage Resource archaeological reconnaissance of the Development property will be undertaken prior to construction.

It is recommended that the Hecla North Shore Cottage Subdivision Proposal be licenced pursuant to the Manitoba Environment Act in accordance with the limits, terms and conditions as described in the attached draft Environment Act Licence.

