

Council Notes: Dec 16, 2008

Kawartha Highlands Signature Site Management Plan is Published

Dave Coulas, Park Superintendent, presented North Kawartha Council with copies of the final management plan for the KHSS park. Mr. Coulas detailed the intensive amount of work and collaboration that was required to prepare the final management plan. A preliminary plan was released about a year ago and the ministry received over 700 written comments. Of paramount interest were the role of the township, the lack of sufficient funding and the interests of private land owners in the park. There were 2 open houses and all comments were read and processed. Mr. Coulas explained that opinions on park usage varied from those that encompassed almost everything to those that wanted no public use. He said that there was close collaboration with the local management advisory board as well as some land owners in the township. The core interests were designed to align with the core values in the original charter. The final management plan states that there will be no gates on roads entering the park but there will be 117 park campsites on a site-specific reservation system. Permits will be available locally or through the website. The plan also deals with all uses of the park including hunting, fishing, boating and cottage activities.

Mr. Coulas thanked council members for their input in shaping the final document.

Mr. Coulas explained that, although the management plan is completed, there is still a lot of work required to “operationalize” it. For the next two years, the ministry will be setting up the infrastructure of the park and the reservation system. There is a huge public education component during this period. Councillor-at-Large, Arnie Brown said he is still concerned about adequate funding particularly in the area of enforcement for parking and park rules. Mr. Coulas assured council that the need for funding, staffing and enforcement would be part of his recommendations in the future.

Copies of the 75 page plan are available from the township office, or by downloading from <http://OntarioParks.com/planning>.