



GOVERNMENT OF
NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
Department of Government Services & Lands
Lands Branch, Land Management Division

Gambo - Port Blandford Cottage Management Plan Review

Environmental Assessment Registration

1. NAME OF UNDERTAKING

Gambo - Port Blandford Cottage Management Plan Review

2. PROPOSER

(i) Name of Body

Land Management Division, Department of Government Services and Lands

(ii) Contact Person

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3. THE UNDERTAKING

(i) Nature of the Undertaking

The project consists of a review and amendment of the 1993 Gambo-Port Blandford Cottage Allocation Plan (ILUC project # 446), and the rationalization and consolidation of five subsidiary projects and plans developed for the area during the past several decades. The other projects are:

1. 1984: Terra Nova River Cottage Development Plan approved 20 remote cottage sites along a 6.5 kilometre section of the river;
2. 1988: ILUC # 272 Pitt's Pond Crown Land Reserve to protect the beach area for public use;

3. 1989: ILUC # 296 approved 15 remote cottage lots at Lake St. John;
4. 1989: ILUC # 321 Crown Land Freeze designated Northwest Pond as Institutional Campground; and
5. 1997: ILUC # 807 approved a 15 lot cottage subdivision at Stagg Pond.

The Plan review involved extensive consultation in 2002 - 2003 with resource managers and other partners. It has considered all resource uses, as well as social, economic and environmental interests, and, in response to the high level of public demand for recreational cottage lots, the aim is to support the continuation of traditional recreational land use, in a manner that supports the integrity and diversity of the natural environment. The strategy is to confine cottage development to areas that are partially developed and/or least likely to conflict with other resource uses, thereby providing unencumbered land that can support other initiatives. The approach strives for a balance between the competing and conflicting demands on the provincial land base, and is founded on principles of multiple use concepts, whereby Crown resources are managed for the benefit of all citizens.

(ii) Current Proposal

The current submission has four components: 1) withdrawal of cottage lots in conflict areas; 2) designation of alternative sites for future recreational use; 3) a proposal to develop a planned cottage subdivision; and, 4) designation of cottage areas to accommodate existing illegal structures. Each of these are described in detail below.

1) Restricted Cottage Areas

In areas where the risk of land use conflict is believed to be high - such as near important pine marten habitat, forest harvesting areas, resource roads and scheduled salmon rivers, cottage development is restricted, either entirely or limited in number. Under this proposal, 92 lots will be withdrawn from the quota that was set by the Allocation Plan in 1993. The largest quota reductions are proposed for George's Pond (-17), Pinsent's Pond (-23), Rocky Pond (-22) and the extreme southwest section of Lake St. John Access Road (-25). These back lands will be reserved from cottage development until such time as: 1) further information is available on the parameters of the pine marten habitat i.e. the critical habitat is located and mapped and, 2) a decision is made on the status of the proposed Gambo Pond Ecological Reserve. The proposed cottage lot allocation for 2003 is listed in the attached Table A, which is also detailed on Map A.

2) Designated Cottage Areas

To meet the demand for recreational opportunities, the revised Plan will designate a total of 125 cottage lots; the allocation provides for 90 remote and 35 accessible lots. All future development will be confined to the shoreline of designated **Cottage Development Areas**, as indicated on the accompanying Map A. Much of the new development will be accommodated as in-fill within existing developed areas. These include Boatswain's Pond, Chain Pond, Salmon Pond and the Lake St. John access road which can accommodate an additional 11 in-fill lots between eight mile bridge and Pinsent Pond. It is proposed that the maximum quota for Lake St. John be increased from 25 to 35 lots, providing an additional 10 sites to meet current demand.

3) Cottage Subdivision Area

The submission is seeking approval in-principle for a proposal to extend an existing cottage subdivision at Stagg Pond to Maccle's Lake. The Stagg Pond cottage subdivision has 15 developed lots that were approved in 1997 through ILUC project #807. Preliminary analysis indicate the access road to Stagg Pond could be extended to the north shore of Maccle's Lake, providing an additional 35 additional lots, maybe less, depending on the outcome of a detailed site assessment: including water and soil testing, and a study of the carrying capacity of each lake (see Map A insert for proposed lot layout) The project will allocate no more than 35 lots, subject to full agreement of relevant government departments and agencies.

4) Illegal Cottage Development

Where possible, the Cottage Management Plan provides for the accommodation of existing, unauthorized cottages within the Planning Area. A particular problem exists in the Spracklin's Road area where there are 8 illegal cottages clustered near lots that were issued prior to the approval of the Gambo-Port Blandford Management Plan (March 1993). Spracklin Road will be designated as a Cottage Development Area and all illegal structures will be processed in accordance with standard Crown land procedures. No new cottage lots will be issued in this area.

The Terra Nova River Cottage Development Plan was approved in 1984 to allocate 20 cottage sites along a 6.5 kilometer section of the river. It is estimated that 9 of these cottages were build on private property (Robert Brooking grant), not Crown land. These cottages, and no more, will be accommodated as in-fill lots within the existing Terra Nova River Planning Area Boundary, as is defined on the accompanying Map A. No new cottage lots will be issued in the Terra Nova River Plan Area.

(iii) Purpose / Rationale / Need for the Undertaking

The Gambo-Port Blandford Cottage Planning Area has been used as a cottage area for several decades. Recently, a number of forest access roads have been built enabling easier access to more remote areas by snowmobile and all terrain vehicles. The improved access has resulted in an increase in demand for recreational cottage lots. The current Plan review aims to be responsive to these changing needs.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE UNDERTAKING

(i) Geographic Location

The Gambo - Port Blandford Cottage Planning Area is located on the south side of the Trans Canada Highway (TCH) between the towns of Port Blandford and Gambo in central Newfoundland. The Planning Area Boundary (PAB) is defined by the boundary of Terra Nova National Park to the east, Bay du Nord Wilderness Area to the southwest, the TCH to the northeast and a line dividing the Gambo Pond/Terra Nova River watershed to the west, northwest (see Map B).

The Cottage Planning Area encompasses an area of approximately 140,000 hectares (1400 sq. km.), much of which is inaccessible by non-off road vehicles. It is largely a remote wilderness area that extends inland approximately 65 kilometers (40 miles) to its innermost boundary. The Town of Terra Nova, accessed via Route 301, is located within the Planning Area. The abandoned CN rail line of the former Newfoundland Railway stretches through the area, providing a natural linear park, which runs parallel to TCH.

(ii) Existing Site

There are more than a dozen, large lakes and ponds within the Plan Area, some of which have had cottage management plans in place since the mid 1970's. Over the past three decades, approximately 300 titles have been issued in the area; they are mostly concentrated around MacCle's Lake, Terra Nova Lake and, to some extent, Lake St. John. The current proposal will result in a further concentration of development, particularly at MacCle's Lake. However, every effort will be made to ensure the additional development will have little or no detrimental effect on the natural environment. The environment is afforded protection through the following means:

- Cottage development areas are subject to site capability analysis which includes water and soil testing and a water body cottage capacity study;
- Accessible cottage lots are subject to septic waste disposal system designs that must be approved by Government Service Centers;

- Buffers are proposed around rivers and streams, and between cottage lots and other resource uses; and,
- The Cottage Management Plan will be registered with the Environmental Assessment Division for review.

(iii) Development

The proposed allocation of 125 lots will be located at sites as indicated on the enclosed Map A. No application for cottage development will be accepted outside of a designated Cottage Development Areas.

APPENDICES