

PROTECTING ONTARIO'S WILDERNESS:  
A HISTORY OF WILDERNESS CONSERVATION IN ONTARIO,  
1927-1973

By

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A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree  
Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University

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PROTECTING ONTARIO'S WILDERNESS, 1927-1973

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (1989)  
(History)

MCMASTER UNIVERSITY  
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Protecting Ontario's Wilderness: A History of  
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NUMBER OF PAGES: vii, 535

## ABSTRACT

Wilderness has been touted as an integral part of Canadian culture. But, from 1927 to 1967, Ontario wilderness conservationists failed to attract wide popular support. They exerted an influence on provincial park policy, far beyond the strength of their small numbers. In several campaigns, conservationists convinced politicians and civil servants to adopt more protectionist park policies. This record was the result of individual efforts, organization and perseverance. Conservationist lobbying tactics -- from quiet diplomacy before 1967, to mass-media manipulation thereafter -- reflect the changing Ontario political culture. By the early 1970s, they had fostered a more broadly-based preservation movement.

Conservationists promoted different ideas of wilderness. Both the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, and the Canadian Quetico-Superior Committee (1949) -- reorganized as the Quetico Foundation (1954) -- embraced multiple use. It enabled the harmonization of natural resource extraction with the protection of scenic and recreational values, by no-cut shoreline reserves along canoe routes. The Federation of Ontario Naturalists (1931) advocated the conservation of wilderness for its own sake.

Motivated by scientific and aesthetic appreciation, the naturalists successfully lobbied for publicly-owned, rigidly controlled nature reserves. Environmental awareness in the 1980s fed a resurgence and refinement of the ecological wilderness concept. This awakening spawned a new pressure group -- the Algonquin Wildlands League (AWL, 1988). It championed a wilderness free of interference with ecological processes, especially resource extraction and recreational overuse.

The AWL built Ontario's modern wilderness preservation movement. By publicizing its wilderness philosophy, the league strengthened the Parks Branch in departmental struggles over provincially-owned wildlands. The AWL persuaded the government to adopt more protectionist policies for Algonquin, Lake Superior and Killarney parks. Preservationist victories included a ban on logging in Quetico Park (1971), and the reclassification of both Quetico and Killarney as primitive parks (1973). After 1973, both preservationists and civil servants planned a system of provincial wilderness parks.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My greatest debt is to Dr. John Weaver -- advisor and friend. John's patience, professionalism, enthusiasm and editorial expertise enabled me to complete this work. For critical comments, I thank my committee, especially Profs. Bruce Hodgins, Richard Rempel and Harvey Levenstein. M.A. advisor and friend Dr. Gerald Killan inspired me, and kindly shared his forthcoming provincial parks history. I thank the many others -- especially Bruce Litteljohn, Patrick Hardy and Gavin Henderson -- who granted interviews, read chapters and/or offered advice. Bill and Wendy Addison graciously opened their home and files to me during a memorable trip. For access to documents, I thank Norm Richards of MNR, Charles A. Kelly, and the conservationists and archivists who made this study feasible. Financial support from both McMaster University and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada is gratefully acknowledged. My extended family repeatedly rejuvenated my spirit. Mom and Dad also contributed food and shelter during research trips to Toronto. Above all, I am grateful for the many selfless ways in which my wife, Dr. Patricia Devolder, sustained me. I dedicate this work to Pat for her love, advice, encouragement and understanding -- and for typing the bibliography! None of this would have been possible without her.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

### (A) ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS:

A.P. - W.D. Addison Papers, Kakabeka Falls, Ont.  
BML - Bruce M. Litteljohn Papers, Toronto  
CPAWS - Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society Files, Toronto  
FON - Federation of Ontario Naturalists' Archives, Don Mills  
HNC - Hamilton Naturalists' Club Records, in OA  
LPL - London Public Library, London, Ontario  
MFNC - McIlwraith Field Naturalists' Club Records, in LPL  
MHS - Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minn.  
MNR - Ministry of Natural Resources, Whitney Block, Queen's Park, Toronto  
OA - Public Archives of Ontario, Toronto  
P.C. - "Parks-Canada" Records (papers of NPPAC), in TUA  
PRAB - Parks and Recreational Areas Branch Files, MNR  
QF - Quetico Foundation Files, Toronto  
QSC - Quetico-Superior Council Records, in MHS  
RBG - Royal Botanical Gardens Library, Hamilton, Ontario  
ROM - Royal Ontario Museum Archives, Toronto  
SCO - Sierra Club of Ontario Files, Toronto  
SFO - Sigurd F. Olson Papers, in MHS  
TFNC - Toronto Field Naturalists' Club Records, in OA  
TUA - Trent University Archives, Peterborough, Ont.  
UTA - University of Toronto Archives, Toronto  
WL - Wildlands League Files, Toronto

### (B) GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND CONSERVATION GROUPS:

AWL - Algonquin Wildlands League (est. 1968)  
CAS - Canadian Audubon Society (est. 1981)  
CCO - Conservation Council of Ontario (est. 1954)  
CFA - Canadian Forestry Association  
CFW - Coalition For Wilderness (est. 1973; AWL, NPPAC, CNF, FON, SCO)  
CNF - Canadian Nature Federation (evolved from CAS in 1971)  
CPAWS - Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (evolved from NPPAC in 1986)  
DLF - Ontario Department of Lands and Forests  
FON - Federation of Ontario Naturalists (est. 1931)  
MNR - Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (evolved from DLF in 1971)  
NCC - Nature Conservancy of Canada (est. 1963)  
NPPAC - National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada (established 1963)  
OFIA - Ontario Forest Industries Association  
PPAC - Provincial Parks [Advisory] Council (est. 1975)  
QF - Quetico Foundation (est. 1954)  
QSC - Quetico-Superior Council (est. 1927)  
SCO - Sierra Club of Ontario (est. 1970)  
WL - Wildlands League (evolved from AWL in 1986; Ont. chapter of CPAWS)



## INTRODUCTION: WHY WILDERNESS?

Historians and literary critics have touted the great impact of wilderness, both as a physical reality and an abstract concept, on the development of a distinct Canadian cultural identity. Canadian history, literature, painting, cinema, music and recreation allegedly have been influenced and distinguished by the wilderness. Two schoolteachers recently advanced the proposition that wilderness has been the single most important influence on Canadian literature. One historian has explained the success of the Group of Seven by claiming that a wilderness ethos -- an appreciation for spiritual, aesthetic and physical values -- had developed by the 1930s. Other scholars have emphasized outdoor recreation, especially canoeing, as evidence of Canadians' close identification with the land and reverence for the wild. The popular conception remains that wilderness is a central theme in Canadian cultural expression.<sup>1</sup>

The pervasiveness of these cultural perceptions reinforced a myth of abundance. Having been exposed to wilderness, through art or recreation, many Canadians assumed that there would always be unspoiled wildland. Indeed, to the collective mind of a developing nation,

Canada had too much wilderness. Consequently, most Canadians had little interest in preservation prior to the late 1960s. This Canadian paradox -- celebration of wilderness in popular culture, but indifference to preservationist efforts -- is well-illustrated by the Ontario experience. The early history of wilderness conservation in this province is marked by a lack of popular support. For forty years, wildland enthusiasts failed to attract wide public interest in their conservation campaigns. Not until 1971 did a more broadly-based preservation movement emerge. This finding suggests a reinterpretation of the importance of wilderness to Canadians in the twentieth century.

In 1969 American historian Roderick Nash argued that wilderness preservation was not a contentious public issue in Canada. In the absence of a wilderness movement on a "broad, citizen level," wrote Nash, "the political effectiveness of the few Canadian preservationists is and has been slight."<sup>2</sup> This interpretation is in need of revision. While there was no overwhelming grass-roots support for preservation in Ontario, conservationists exerted an influence, far beyond the proportion of their number, on provincial wilderness policy. Nash assumed, in "Whiggish" fashion, that the absence of an American-style, broadly-based preservation movement in Ontario must have meant political impotency. But Canadian political

institutions and styles dictated a different recipe for success. In several campaigns, Ontario conservationists convinced provincial politicians and civil servants to adopt more protectionist policies for wildlands. This record was the result of individual efforts, organization and perseverance.

Published histories of the American wilderness movement have recently shifted focus from politics to intellectual history, examining the changing idea of wilderness perceived by both amateur conservationists and the official bureaucracies charged with administering wild lands. This approach -- inspired by Roderick Nash's Wilderness and the American Mind (revised 1982), Stephen Fox's John Muir and His Legacy (1981), and refined in Philip Terrie's excellent study, Forever Wild (1985) -- is possible partly because the necessary political histories have been written.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, there is no political history of wilderness preservation in Ontario.<sup>4</sup>

This dissertation blends two themes: the politics of wilderness preservation and an intellectual history of the changing idea of wilderness. The approach reflects historical patterns. Ideas of wilderness in Ontario have changed over time. These concepts have fueled controversies about preservation and management. Subtle ideological shifts have also sparked changes in the strategy and effectiveness of conservationists. Lobbying tactics -- from

quiet diplomacy before 1967, to mass-media manipulation thereafter -- reflected a changing Ontario political culture.

The preservationists were a dynamic, diverse lot. Although many conservation groups dealt with the same cause, they embraced people from different classes, educational traditions and economic interests. Wilderness organizations either stagnated or evolved in both their philosophy and techniques. The Quetico Foundation (1954) chose the former fate, while the Algonquin Wildlands League (1968) pursued the latter course.

Organizations are receptacles of consensus and change. But they are only as effective as their leadership. This study employs biographical profiles to highlight individual experience as a crucial influence on the development of wilderness ideas. Biographies also illuminate the civic-minded ethos that crossed the boundaries of modern states. Books, lecturers, students and ideas moved freely across the 49th parallel, prodding old Ontario out of its localized values and inertia on wilderness preservation. The text therefore focuses on intellectuals and the international world in which they often moved.

This dissertation examines the changing idea of wilderness in Ontario and the impact of significant groups and individuals on public policy from 1927 to 1973. Several

questions guided the research. What is wilderness? How was it conceived? Who fought for its protection and why? What arguments were employed to encourage wilderness protection? What forces caused wilderness concepts to change? Did these concepts enjoy a wider public currency? What were the strengths and weaknesses of the preservationist crusade?

In Ontario, the predominance of crown-owned land made the provincial park system the most significant vehicle for the protection of wild land. Within that framework, civil servants and conservationists promoted different ideas of wilderness. Both the Department of Lands and Forests -- the ministry responsible for provincial parkland -- and Ontario's first wilderness organization, the Canadian Quetico-Superior Committee, embraced the "multiple use" concept of wilderness. It enabled the harmonization of natural resource extraction, especially commercial logging, with the protection of scenic and recreational values, by maintaining no-cut shoreline reserves of timber along canoe routes in large provincial parks like Algonquin and Quetico. Another group, the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, promoted the conservation of wilderness for its own sake. Motivated by scientific and aesthetic appreciation, the federation advocated a system of publicly-owned, rigidly controlled nature reserves -- or wilderness remnants -- to preserve typical landscapes with their natural plant and

animal communities, and to preserve unique elements, such as species or important geological features.

Environmental awareness in the 1960s stimulated a resurgence of this ecological wilderness concept.

Naturalists, scientists, recreationists and environmentalists joined forces to publicize the need for preservation. The awakening spawned a new pressure group -- the Algonquin Wildlands League (AWL). Eventually rejecting multiple use, the league championed a wilderness free of interference with ecological processes, especially resource extraction and recreational overuse. In a complicated dialectical process, the parks bureaucracy and the preservationists influenced one another. By publicizing its wilderness philosophy, the league supported planners within the DLF's Parks Branch who were fighting internal departmental struggles for provincially-owned wildland. The AWL gained access to important technical information, and forced the government to make public participation part of the planning process.

Greater success came in the early 1970s when the league's mass-media techniques built Ontario's modern wilderness preservation movement. The AWL persuaded the government to adopt more protectionist policies for Algonquin, Lake Superior and Killarney provincial parks. Preservationist victories were highlighted by a logging ban in Quetico Park (1971), and the reclassification of Quetico

and Killarney as primitive parks (1973). In their publications, political activism and success, Ontario preservationists set high standards for other Canadian conservationists.

American and British cultural influences deeply affected Ontario wilderness advocates. They took from the British, traditions of natural history, voluntary conservation efforts, ecological concepts and the idea of local nature reserves. Ontarians adopted a host of American ideas, including management concepts, organizational techniques and lobbying tactics. But, there was a lag between the two nations' conservation efforts. Both the Sierra Club (1892) and the United States Wilderness Society (1935) were well established long before Ontario's first wilderness organization was born in 1949. This lag reveals something about Canadian development and North American history.<sup>5</sup>

The physical environment intervened in the culture of the North-Atlantic triangle to produce distinctive timing and results for Canadian wilderness conservation. Ontario, with its huge Precambrian Shield country, experienced much lighter pressures of urbanization, population and industrialization on hinterlands, than did the United States. Destruction of the northern Ontario wilderness was postponed because it was relatively inhospitable, unlike the fertile American heartland.<sup>6</sup> Not surprisingly, American

conservation groups and some park agencies were ahead of Ontario organizations. Indeed, most Ontarians were slower and more primitive than Americans in understanding wilderness issues before the 1970s. But the Canadian constitutional division of powers also influenced the speed of conservationist advances. Unlike centralist, federalist efforts in the United States, Canadian preservation battles were fought at the provincial level because the provinces control much crown land. A national preservationist movement was therefore slow to develop in Canada. It is ironic that Canadians, despite a well-worn national myth, had difficulty attaining even American standards and enthusiasm for wilderness preservation.

In Working For Wildlife (1978), Janet Foster argued that a select group of federal civil servants, imbued with sensitivity and foresight, directed government policy and legislation for the preservation of Canadian wildlife from the 1880s to 1922.<sup>7</sup> During the 50 years that followed, wilderness preservation in Ontario unfolded in roughly similar fashion. A very tiny minority of civil servants and the public directed and pushed government policy toward a more protectionist position on wilderness than most Canadians would have supported or even understood. This pattern sharply contrasted the American experience, in which a groundswell of public support forced American planners and



legislators to adopt more preservationist policies earlier in the twentieth century.

The upper-middle class intellectuals who fought for wilderness were vulnerable to charges of elitism. Much like its American cousin, the Ontario conservation movement was dominated by white, Anglo-Saxon males. Their ideas, before the 1970s, were not shared by a wider public. A liberal democratic assessment of the preservationists must remain ambiguous. Their advocacy frequently implied that they wanted to maintain wilderness for their own selfish purposes. Caught up in their own rhetoric, conservationist justifications for recreational use of the wilderness often seemed inconsistent. These contradictions indicate the emotional power of the wilderness ideal after 1960.

All governments deal with the question of who gets access to what resources -- and wilderness is a major item in an affluent society. This debate seems more problematic for politicians in an urban and industrialized society, like Canada, than for a developing agrarian state like Kenya, or urbanized and heavily populated states like India and China. In Ontario, because of fairly light pressures on the use of wild land, political options were relatively more ample than elsewhere. But this did not make choices in allocating wilderness resources any easier for provincial politicians. 7.8

This dissertation reveals something of Ontario's intellectual history, drawing inspiration from Robert Craig

Brown, John Wadland, Carl Berger, George Altmeyer and others.<sup>9</sup> Historian Philip Terrie recently argued that an American "modern wilderness aesthetic" began to emerge in the 1920s. It combined "respect for the integrity of the landscape"; a "belief that human interference violates that integrity"; appreciation of the "dynamic, interdependent system of nature"; faith in the capacity of the land's "natural constituents ... to manage their own affairs, even when this involves the loss to human society of economically valuable resources"; and "respect for the smallest details of nature".<sup>9</sup> A remarkably similar wilderness concept had evolved in Ontario by the early 1970s.

This study is part political, planning and land use history. It extends lines of inquiry pursued by Canada's staples historians.<sup>10</sup> Two related but more recent works examine the history of provincial natural resource policy: Richard Lambert and Paul Pross's Renewing Nature's Wealth (1987) and H.V. Nelles' The Politics of Development (1974).<sup>11</sup> Wilderness is a relatively overlooked publicly-owned resource. Bruce Hodgins and Jamie Benidickson's The Temagami Experience (1989) is the lone published book-length study of land use history and resource management conflicts in the northern Ontario wilderness.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the Ontario preservationist story after 1980 traces one aspect of the global environmental movement. Robert Page and Thomas Burton have briefly examined the cultural milieu which

fueled wilderness and environmental conservation in Canada.<sup>13</sup>

There are several limitations to this study. It begins with Ontario's first sustained campaign for wilderness conservation, and concludes with the most successful preservation battle over a single provincial park. After 1973, both preservationists and civil servants planned a system of provincial wilderness parks. The text does not discuss Conservation Authorities or the Niagara Escarpment planning process.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, this is not a history of the provincial park system. Dr. Gerald Killan has completed an excellent manuscript on the latter subject.<sup>15</sup>

Many scholars have wrestled with the slippery question of defining wilderness.<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, wilderness is a state of mind, a perception coloured by human biases and cultural values. To some people, a ravine is a wilderness; others demand larger, more remote areas. This study considers wilderness to be what the preservationists perceived, and fought for, as wilderness. One may recognize, however, a continuum of sizes and land types ranging from a few acres of wetland to several square miles of boreal forest. In the provincial park system, the preservationists focused on nature reserves, natural environment and primitive (now wilderness) parks.

The text is organized chronologically and thematically. Each of the first two chapters examines a conservation group, its concept of wilderness, and an advocacy campaign. The third chapter discusses changing ideas, new organizations and a slight broadening of the wilderness debate during the 1980s. Chapters four through seven focus on the origins, activities and philosophy of the Algonquin Wildlands League -- Ontario's premier preservationist group. A conclusion follows.

<sup>1</sup>Bruce M. Litteljohn and Douglas H. Pimlott, (eds.), Why Wilderness? A Report on Mismanagement in Lake Superior Provincial Park (Toronto, 1971); Margaret Atwood, Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (Toronto, 1972); Northrop Frye, The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination (Toronto, 1971); Bruce Litteljohn and Jon Pearce, (eds.), Marked By the Wild: An Anthology of Literature Shaped By the Canadian Wilderness (Toronto, 1973; reprinted 1984); Borden Spears, (ed.), Wilderness Canada (Toronto, 1970); T.D. MacLulich, "Reading The Land: The Wilderness Tradition in Canadian Letters," Journal of Canadian Studies 20 (Summer, 1985): 29-44; Wayland Drew, "Wilderness and Culture," Alternatives 3 (Summer, 1974): 8-11; James Polk, Wilderness Writers: Ernest Thompson Seton, Charles G.D. Roberts, Grey Owl (Toronto, 1972); Elaine Theberge, "The Untrodden Earth: Early Nature Writing in Canada," Nature Canada 3 (April/June, 1974): 30-6; Maria Tippet, "The Writing of English-Canadian Cultural History, 1970-85," Canadian Historical Review LXVII (Dec., 1986): 555; Douglas Cole, "Artists, Patrons and the Public: An Enquiry into the Success of the Group of Seven," Journal of Canadian Studies 13 (Summer, 1978): 69-78; Bruce W. Hodgins and Margaret Hobbs, (eds.), Nastawgan: The Canadian North By Canoe and Snowshoe (Weston, Ont., 1985); W.L. Morton, The Canadian Identity second edition (Toronto, 1972), 5; Peter Russell, (ed.), Nationalism in Canada (Toronto, 1966); Geoffrey Wall and John S. Marsh, (eds.), Recreational Land Use: Perspectives on its Evolution in Canada Carleton Library Series (Ottawa, 1982); a contradictory view is Gaile

McGregor, The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Landscape (Toronto, 1985).

<sup>2</sup>Roderick Nash, "Wilderness and Man in North America," in J.G. Nelson and R.C. Scace, (eds.), The Canadian National Parks: Today and Tomorrow Studies in Land Use History and Landscape Change, National Park Series No.3, Vol. I (Calgary, 1969), 84.

<sup>3</sup>Roderick Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind third edition (New Haven, 1982); Stephen Fox, John Muir and His Legacy: the American Conservation Movement (Boston, 1981); Philip Terrie, Forever Wild: Environmental Aesthetics and the Adirondack Forest Preserve (Philadelphia, 1985). See also Stewart Udall, The Quiet Crisis (New York, 1963); William Schwartz, (ed.), Voices For the Wilderness (New York, 1969); Donald Nicholas Baldwin, The Quiet Revolution: Grass Roots of Today's Wilderness Preservation Movement (Boulder, 1972); Michael Frome, Battle For the Wilderness (New York, 1974); Craig W. Allin, The Politics of Wilderness Preservation Contributions in Political Science No. 64 (Westport, 1982); Dennis M. Roth, The Wilderness Movement and the National Forests (College Station, Texas, [1989]); Susan L. Flader, "Thinking Like a Mountain: A Biographical Study of Aldo Leopold," Forest History 17 (April, 1973): 14-28; R. Newell Searle, Saving Quetico-Superior: A Land Set Apart (Minnesota Historical Society, 1977); Alfred Runte, National Parks: The American Experience (Lincoln, 1979).

<sup>4</sup>On Canadian federal efforts, see Leslie Bella's Parks For Profit (Montreal, 1987), "Partisan Politics and National Parks North of 60," Park News 15 (Fall, 1979): 6-13, and "The Politics of Preservation: Creating National Parks in Canada, and in the United States, England and Wales," Planning Perspectives 1 (Sept., 1986): 189-206; J.G. Nelson, Canada's Wildlands Working Paper No. 4 (University of Waterloo, Faculty of Environmental Studies, 1978); and W. Fergus Lothian's episodic History of Canada's National Parks 4 vols. (Ottawa, 1976-81).

<sup>5</sup>Roderick Nash claimed that the "Canadian public's sensitivity to and enthusiasm for wilderness values lags at least two generations behind opinion in the United States"; see "Wilderness and Man in North America," 75. If this was true in 1969, it was not valid for Ontarians by 1971.

<sup>6</sup>Morton, The Canadian Identity, 4-5; Nash, "Wilderness and Man in North America," 79-81.

<sup>7</sup>Janet Foster, Working For Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada (Toronto, 1978).

<sup>9</sup>Robert Craig Brown, "The Doctrine of Usefulness: Natural Resources and National Park Policy in Canada, 1887-1914," in J.G. Nelson, (ed.), Canadian Parks in Perspective (Montreal, 1970), 46-62; John Wadland, Ernest Thompson Seton: Man in Nature and the Progressive Era, 1880-1915 Biologists and Their World Collection (New York, 1978); Carl Berger, The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914 (Toronto, 1970), and Science, God, and Nature in Victorian Canada The 1982 Joanne Goodman Lectures (Toronto, 1983); George Altmeyer, "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada, 1893-1914," Journal of Canadian Studies XI (Aug., 1976): 21-36; Marcia B. Kline, Beyond the Land Itself: Views of Nature in Canada and the United States (Cambridge, 1970); Lovat Dickson, Wilderness Man: The Strange Story of Grey Owl (Toronto, 1973); Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge, Mass., 1950); Hans Huth, Nature and the American: Three Centuries of Changing Attitudes (Lincoln, 1957); Douglas Owsram, The Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900 (Toronto, 1980); Keith Thomas, Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800 (Markham, Ont., 1983); John Sheail, Nature in Trust: The History of Nature Conservation in Britain (Glasgow and London, 1976); Edward H. Dahl, "Mid Forests Wild": A Study of the Concept of Wilderness in the Writings of Susanna Moodie, J.W.D. Moodie, Catherine Parr Traill and Samuel Strickland, c. 1830-1855 History Division Paper No. 3 (Ottawa, National Museum of Man, 1973); Pamela Margaret White, "A Heartland-Hinterland Analysis of Images of Northern Canada as Frontier, Wilderness, and Homeland," (unpublished M.A. thesis, Dept. of Geography, Carleton University, 1979); Eric Owen Davies, "The Wilderness Myth: Wilderness in British Columbia," (unpublished M.A. thesis, Dept. of Geography, University of British Columbia, 1972); Robert D. Turner and William E. Rees, "A Comparative Study of Parks Policy in Canada and the United States," Nature Canada 2 (Jan./March, 1973): 31-6; Robert A. J. McDonald, "'Holy Retreat' or 'Practical Breathing Spot'? Class Perceptions of Vancouver's Stanley Park, 1910-1913," Canadian Historical Review LXV (June, 1984): 127-153.

<sup>9</sup>Terrie, Forever Wild, 8. The terms conservationist and preservationist changed over time. They are defined here as they were used in the period.

<sup>10</sup>See A.R.M. Lower, Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada (Toronto, 1936), The North American Assault on the Canadian Forest: A History of the Lumber Trade between Canada and the United States (New York, 1938), Great Britain's Woodyard: British America and the

Timber Trade, 1763-1867 (Montreal and Kingston, 1973); Harold A. Innis, The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History (New York, 1930), The Cod Fisheries: The History of an International Economy (Toronto, 1940), Essays in Canadian Economic History (Toronto, 1956).

<sup>11</sup>Richard S. Lambert with Paul Pross, Renewing Nature's Wealth: A Centennial History of the Public Management of Lands, Forests and Wildlife in Ontario 1763-1967 (Toronto, 1967); H.V. Nelles, The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines and Hydro-electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941 (Toronto, 1974). See also Peter Gillis, "The Ottawa Lumber Barons and the Conservation Movement, 1880-1914," Journal of Canadian Studies 9 (1974): 14-30; Bruce W. Hodgins, Jamie Benidickson, Peter Gillis, "The Ontario and Quebec Experiments in Forest Reserves, 1883-1930," Journal of Forest History 26 (Jan., 1982): 20-33; Ian Radforth, Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980 (Toronto, 1987); R. Peter Gillis and Thomas Roach, Lost Initiatives: Canada's Forest Industries, Forest Policy and Forest Conservation Contributions in Economics and Economic History (New York, 1986).

<sup>12</sup>Bruce W. Hodgins and Jamie Benidickson, The Temagami Experience: Recreation, Resources, and Aboriginal Rights in the Northern Ontario Wilderness (Toronto, 1989).

<sup>13</sup>Robert Page, Northern Development: The Canadian Dilemma (Toronto, 1986); Thomas L. Burton, Natural Resource Policy in Canada: Issues and Perspectives (Toronto, 1972).

<sup>14</sup>See Arthur Herbert Richardson, Conservation By the People: The History of the Conservation [Authorities] Movement in Ontario To 1970 (Toronto, 1974); and Yvette Carol Wells, "Planning the Niagara Escarpment: An Historical Analysis," (unpublished B.A. Honours thesis, Dept. of Geography, University of Western Ontario, 1985).

<sup>15</sup>I am grateful to Dr. Killan for allowing me access to his forthcoming official history of Ontario's Provincial Park System. See also his "Mowat and a Park Policy For Niagara Falls, 1873-1887," Ontario History 70 (1978): 115-135; K. Morrison, "The Evolution of the Ontario Provincial Park System," in Wall and Marsh, Recreational Land Use, 102-121; and Paul F.J. Eagles, A Study of the Ontario Provincial Parks Act Recreation Publication Series No. 1 (Dept. of Recreation, University of Waterloo, 1984).

<sup>16</sup>J.G. Nelson, Canada's Wildlands, 7-10; Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, 1-7.

## CHAPTER 1: THE QUETICO-SUPERIOR COUNCIL AND THE MULTIPLE USE CONCEPT OF WILDERNESS (1927-1960)

To contemporary Ontario conservationists wilderness preservation likely evokes images and memories of the well-publicized and popularly supported battles of the post-1965 period. These campaigns were only part of the broader environmental movement which swept North America. Relatively unknown then and today was the province's first battle for wilderness which had an important influence both on government officials and on the preservationist lobby, thereby laying the groundwork for subsequent controversies. The first organizations established to protect wilderness values in Ontario -- the Quetico-Superior Council (1928) based in the United States, and its offspring, the Canadian Quetico-Superior Committee (1949), reorganized as the Quetico Foundation (1954) -- embraced an essentially multiple-use concept of wilderness. Although these conservationists gave primary emphasis to preserving scenic shorelines for canoe enthusiasts in Quetico Provincial Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area of the Superior National Forest, their wilderness concept was liberal enough to accommodate commercial logging, fishing, and resort development. After 1960, more preservation-minded groups



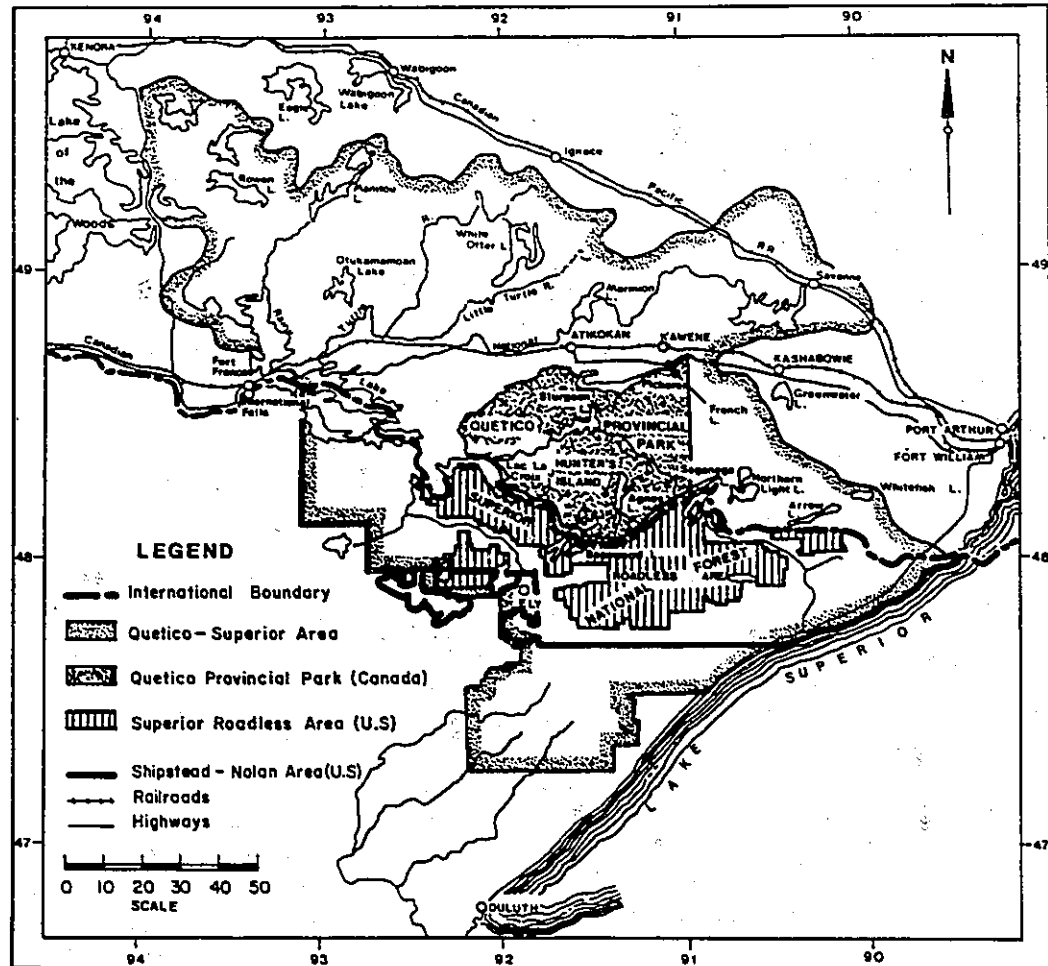
came to the forefront in Ontario. This new generation of conservationists rejected the multiple use philosophy of the Quetico Foundation and articulated instead an ecologically-based rationale for protecting wildlands.

The first organized effort to protect wilderness in Ontario had other important differences from later battles. First, the Quetico-Superior movement was launched, funded and directed primarily by Americans. Subsequent campaigns in Ontario were largely conducted by Canadians. Second, this initial impulse to protect wilderness failed to cultivate and therefore did not enjoy mass support in Canada. The Quetico saga in Ontario was played out by an elite pressure group of wildland enthusiasts, mostly professionals and politically powerful individuals. These conservationists sought in vain to obtain grass-roots support in the province for their scheme. While many activists had excellent promotional skills and media contacts, they failed to breach the walls of public indifference about wilderness in Ontario. Instead, the Americans were forced to pursue their conservationist goals by seeking to influence directly the upper echelons of the civil service and the provincial government. Third, the campaign dragged into the limelight traditional fears and distrust characteristic of dominion-provincial relations in Canada. The story involved a diversity of interests, including a powerful American pressure group, an activist

American state, an archetypical timber baron, several levels of government and their respective complex bureaucracies. The successful conclusion reached in 1980 which capped a thirty-three year campaign, was possible largely because many of the players in the piece shared a similar concept of wilderness.

# I

The Quetico-Superior wilderness movement emerged during the mid-1920s in direct response to a grandiose hydro-electric power development scheme which threatened scenic values in the Rainy Lake watershed. This vast area embraces 14,500 square miles of lakes and forests straddling the international border between Ontario and Minnesota, including Quetico Provincial Park and the Boundary Waters Canoe Area of the Superior National Forest. In 1925, the International Joint Commission commenced hearings on the proposals of Edward Wellington Backus, a Minneapolis-based timber baron who controlled much of the forest products industries in the watershed and the economies of resource towns like International Falls, Fort Frances, Kenora and Fort William. Backus planned to harness the immense hydro potential and exploit the timber resources of the region. He had acquired the rights to most of the potential dam sites along the international border. His proposed dams would raise water levels up to eighty feet in the border



**MAP 1.1: The Quetico-Superior Area**  
 (map by Sandy Sparkes, London, Ontario)

lakes, causing incalculable damage to the scenic and natural qualities of the area.<sup>1</sup>

Backus's development schemes alarmed conservationists in the United States where a "wilderness cult" had blossomed since the turn of the century, and where wilderness protection had emerged as a significant political issue. To wild country enthusiasts, especially those in the cities of the American midwest, Quetico-Superior possessed great symbolic value as "the last of the North Woods," the only nationally-owned lake country of its kind, and a place unrivalled for canoeing in a primitive environment. As early as 1919, an estimated 12,750 visitors vacationed in the Superior National Forest, several hundred of whom paddled north into Quetico Provincial Park. An acrimonious debate over the issue of roads versus wilderness in the early 1920s culminated in a precedent-setting management plan for the Superior Forest in 1926 which established three roadless areas encompassing 1000 square miles for primitive canoeing, while restricting resorts and cottages on public lands to peripheral areas.<sup>2</sup> The wildlands proponents did not object that this plan allowed for selective logging in the roadless areas since the new policy provided for no-cut shoreline reserves along waterways and portages. In effect, the primary goals of this generation of wilderness enthusiasts -- the protection of scenic and recreational values -- had been secured.

Against the backdrop of the roads controversy, the International Joint Commission (IJC) heard the merits of Edward Backus's ambitions debated in 1925. American conservationists opposed Backus, arguing that the need for more hydro-electricity was unproven and that regardless of the industrial benefits, the public good would be better served by preserving the region's scenic values.<sup>9</sup> Some conservationists realized that to defeat Backus, they would have to draft an alternative land use plan for the Rainy Lake watershed, and organize a wilderness association to gather public support in both the United States and Canada.

These tasks fell upon Ernest C. Oberholtzer (1884-1977), a Harvard-trained landscape architect who had studied under Frederick Law Olmsted, a self-taught naturalist, woodsman, expert on Ojibway culture, and an island resident on Rainy Lake since 1912. He was advised and encouraged by a small group of American wildland enthusiasts including Wall Street attorney Sewell T. Tyng, Duluth lawyer Rollo N. Chaffee, officials of the Izaak Walton League in Chicago, and several young Minneapolis architects, businessmen and lawyers, including Frank B. Hubachek, Charles S. Kelly, and Fred Winston. In June 1927, an old friend of Oberholtzer's joined this small circle of activists: Toronto's Arthur Hawkes. An exuberant author, journalist, and former publicity agent for the Canadian Northern Railway, Hawkes had been instrumental in the founding of the Quetico Forest

Reserve in 1909. Drawing on his experience in promotional work, Hawkes advised the conservationists to emphasize historical themes -- reconstructing the "glories of trade and transport" associated with the Northwest Company and fur trade activity in the region -- to stir the public imagination in favour of protecting the border lakes. From that point on, the historical theme was prominent in the literature of the Quetico-Superior movement.<sup>4</sup>

During the summer of 1927, Oberholtzer fleshed out the details of his proposal for the Rainy Lake watershed. He met in October with officials in Chicago, New York and Washington, and with James B. Harkin, Dominion Parks Commissioner in Ottawa, and Ontario Lands and Forests Minister William Finlayson in Toronto. Parks Commissioner Harkin, far ahead of most Canadians in appreciating wilderness values, listened sympathetically but explained that he could do nothing to advance the international project since the Province of Ontario owned the Crown lands in the watershed. In Toronto, Finlayson and his Deputy Minister, Walter C. Cain, gave Oberholtzer a hearing but were frustratingly non-committal. Nevertheless, in early November 1927, Oberholtzer submitted his plan to Ontario's William Finlayson, and to American Secretary of Agriculture William M. Jardine.<sup>5</sup>

Oberholtzer's proposal to protect Quetico-Superior from Backus's industrial design called for a multiple use

programme with primary emphasis on wilderness recreation and scenic protection. "The key note of the plan," he wrote, "is a treaty between the Dominion of Canada and the United States," that would secure four main objectives: (1) "that all visible shores of islands, lakes and rivers" within the watershed would "be made forever inviolate from logging, flooding, or other form of exploitation;" (2) "that all the hinterlands" beyond the shoreline reserves "be devoted to practical forestry for economic purposes;" (3) "that all fish and game be regulated for the maximum productivity;" (4) and "that these major objectives be carried out under the direction of a Joint [international] Commission" representing Canadian and American forestry, park and wildlife officials.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to these four objectives, Oberholtzer recommended that the entire Rainy Lake watershed be divided into three zones. A large central wilderness zone encompassing "the greater part of the watershed" would be "kept as nearly as possible in a state of nature with no roads and no sign of human activities [i.e. along water routes] except such as may pertain to the present normal life of native Indians." Surrounding the primitive area, a narrow middle zone, accessible by water and foot trails, would permit leases for summer camps. Finally, an outer zone of residence lakes, accessible by rail and road, would feature privately owned cottages, hotels and other public

facilities. All told, Oberholtzer had fashioned a remarkable land use plan which harmonized "national needs for recreation," and "local needs for industry."

Having completed the conceptual stage of their campaign to stop Backus, the conservationists moved into the second, organizational phase of their work. On 27 January 1928, they founded the Quetico-Superior Council (QSC), "an international organization associated with the Izaak Walton League of America for the sole purpose of obtaining, with the consent of the Province of Ontario, a treaty ... to protect ... the Rainy Lake watershed ...." Ernest Oberholtzer became president of the council. The executive committee was dominated by businessmen and professionals from Minneapolis-St. Paul, and two Canadians -- Arthur Hawkes ("our interpreter in Ontario") and Jules Preudhomme, solicitor for the city of Winnipeg who had opposed Backus at the IJC hearings.<sup>7</sup> By 1928, then, the Quetico-Superior movement had a formal organization and a carefully drafted programme. Over the next three decades the QSC waged an intensive campaign to persuade government agencies in Canada and the United States to adopt Oberholtzer's plan.

Official reactions on both sides of the border were verbally positive and short on action. American Secretary of Agriculture Jardine seemed enthusiastic about the QSC's multiple use approach but had misgivings about the proposed international commission, unless it was to be purely



advisory in nature. "The best procedure," he explained, "would be for the United States and Ontario to agree on general principles by which they could administer their respective territories." William Finlayson's reaction to the QSC proposal was also encouraging. An advocate of scientific, sustained-yield forestry and modern land use classification -- evident in his introduction of the Forestry Act (1927) -- he was "keenly interested" in a scheme inspired by similar attempts at zoning. Finlayson's reply to Oberholtzer expressed a genuine desire to co-operate with the Americans in managing the Rainy Lake watershed, but the minister opposed two features of Oberholtzer's plan.<sup>6</sup>

First, Finlayson rejected the idea of an international commission to manage the area. This mechanism would require the province to surrender administrative control over an immense area of resource-rich Crown land. For the same reason, Finlayson rejected the treaty proposal. Since treaty-making was the responsibility of the dominion government, the QSC scheme was immediately opposed by Ontario officials who instinctively rejected any suggestion of federal involvement in matters of provincial jurisdiction. They also worried about the long-term economic and political implications of what they construed as a loss of sovereignty over the Ontario portion of the Rainy Lake watershed. Although the province might retain

ownership of the area, a treaty would compromise the Ontario government's authority by obliging the province to manage its own territory according to policies determined by an international commission over which provincial officials might have little influence.<sup>9</sup>

The QSC leaders failed to understand the provincial government's hostility to the idea of a treaty, a consequence of both their American centralist biases and their lack of knowledge of the history of Ontario's relations with the Canadian federal government since Confederation. Accordingly, in February 1928, Oberholtzer invited the province to begin negotiations with the Dominion and American governments for an international agreement. The invitation was quickly rejected. Had the QSC been more flexible, they could have spared themselves years of frustration. Many of their objectives would be achieved without a formal agreement between nations. Both Finlayson and Jardine had indicated as much. In 1929 Jules Preudhomme valiantly tried to convince Oberholtzer that Ontario's opposition to the scheme was not rooted in anti-conservationist attitudes: "It simply reflects," he wrote, "the jealousy with which provincial rights and control of natural resources have always been watched in that province."<sup>10</sup> This explanation fell on deaf ears. Firmly tied to their treaty proposal, the QSC blithely ignored

signals from Toronto, and spent almost 33 years pursuing, unsuccessfully, this lofty but unrealistic goal.

## II

How successful was the QSC in promoting its concept of wilderness for the Rainy Lake watershed? During the 1930s, the council won a series of victories. In 1929 they forged an alliance with the American Legion for the establishment of an "International Peace Memorial Forest" in the Quetico-Superior region. The next year Congress passed the Shipstead-Nolan Act which featured several QSC planks, including 400 foot no-cut shoreline reserves and a ban on alteration of the water levels on federally-owned lakes in the boundary waters area.<sup>11</sup>

In 1930 Lands and Forests Minister Finlayson demonstrated his intent to co-operate with the Americans in protecting the scenic shorelines of major canoe routes along the international border. On the advice of Prairie Club directors in Chicago, who had been primed with information by wilderness author and ecologist Sigurd F. Olson, Finlayson issued instructions to the Quetico Park superintendent to withdraw completely or modify timber cutting rights on the shorelines of lakes comprising eight popular canoe routes.<sup>12</sup>

Other successes followed. In 1934, after the Depression had forced Edward Backus's Minnesota and Ontario Paper Company into receivership, the IJC finally laid to

rest the timber baron's industrial scheme for the watershed. The Final Report stated that "nothing should be done that might mar the beauty or disturb the wildlife of this last great wilderness of the United States." On 30 June 1934, American President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order appointing a Quetico-Superior Committee "to consult and advise" the various government bodies concerned to facilitate the creation of an international "wilderness sanctuary". Roosevelt named to his committee three members of the QSC, including Ernest Oberholtzer, Sewell Tyng, Charles S. Kelly and one representative from each of the departments of Agriculture and the Interior. Two years later, the President expanded the Superior National Forest by 1,250,000 acres, consolidating the area's three previously discrete units.<sup>13</sup>

These notable achievements in the United States were attributable to the extensive public support which the QSC generated for its programme. In contrast, most Ontarians displayed only a dismal apathy for this cause until the 1950s. The only significant press coverage in Canada came when editor John Dafoe and owner Clifford Sifton of the Winnipeg Free Press wrote in favour of the wilderness sanctuary, as did journalist Gregory Clark of the Toronto Daily Star in 1929. Oberholtzer could not understand why there was no support in Ontario for his scheme. The lack of interest by Canadians stemmed from their unfamiliarity with

the remote Quetico-Superior region, a situation exacerbated by the lack of land access from the Ontario side. No highway was constructed to the north of the park until 1954 and the Canadian National Railway's infrequent service stopped at Kawene, some eight miles by rough road north of Quetico park headquarters at French Lake. In addition, there were no cottages or resorts to attract the type of clientele which flocked to Algonquin Park during this period. Of the 1234 recorded visitors to Quetico in 1930, a mere half dozen identified themselves as Canadians. Gregory Clark added another reason for the public indifference to the QSC message: "You cannot expect from the Canadian public anything like the response ... in the United States, because ... you have suffered and lost so much of your wilderness and we are merely in process of losing it." One veteran Ontario canoeist recalled that "[t]o people of my generation ... it was impossible to conceive of the wilderness as a limited, finite thing. If a certain river became too tame because of summer cottages, we could always go farther north."<sup>14</sup> The seemingly unlimited supply of wild hinterland in the north prevented the emergence of widespread concern for preservation.

From 1928 to 1934, the QSC concentrated its lobbying efforts in the United States. Nevertheless, the conservationists were active in Canada. Jules Preudhomme, the Winnipeg solicitor, sent a steady stream of advice to

Oberholtzer, but was geographically removed from the two influential communities in Ontario: Toronto and Port Arthur/Fort William. In April 1928, Arthur Hawkes spoke before a meeting of representatives from the twin cities. He received an "enthusiastic" reception -- "a committee was appointed to consider how best to co-operate" with the QSC in securing "mutual purposes." However, "powerful opposition arose the moment any action was contemplated by the two Chambers of Commerce." Oberholtzer surmised that the source of this opposition was local power broker and Conservative MPP J.A. Mathieu, because of his logging interest which held timber rights in the region. This perception was oversimplified. Mathieu rejected the QSC's treaty idea, not the conservationist proposals; he did favour "close co-operation" between Minnesota and Ontario officials in managing the region. Local citizens in northwestern Ontario soon shared the perspective of Mathieu, Minister Finlayson, and William Jardine.<sup>15</sup> The QSC struggled to overcome this local opposition, but failed to understand it.

Another obstacle to the cultivation of local support was Oberholtzer's instinctive abhorrence of new access roads in Quetico-Superior -- despite his formal plan which allowed for such arteries in an outer zone. In May 1928, H.H. Richards, a banker in Fort William, wrote to Oberholtzer explaining the eagerness of local tourism-minded interests

for "a road into the Quetico Reserve". Richards mentioned talks with provincial engineers who revealed plans to build a highway westward from Port Arthur, ultimately to Fort Frances, finally providing Canadian land access to the boundaries of Quetico Park. This notion sickened Oberholtzer. "Every new road cuts down the wilderness," he scribbled. "What sort of wilder.[ness] do you want ... just the flivers [autos] or cottagers [and] all the whims and blandishments?" Thereafter, Oberholtzer's enthusiasm for cultivating local support ebbed. In 1931 he wrote a program outlining "Suggestions For Cooperation in Ontario," but the scheme failed in its first stage, that of creating an "active group" in Port Arthur/Fort William to spread "knowledge of the program for an international forest and park". A host of factors doomed these efforts. Few local citizens were in favour of the QSC plan. Oberholtzer, fearing anti-American sentiments, vetoed suggestions emanating from the tiny core of supporters to establish an Izaak Walton League chapter at the lakehead. Without a vehicle to attract potential supporters and disseminate information, the QSC never developed the necessary "nucleus of a public movement in Ontario."<sup>18</sup>

There is considerable irony in the QSC's inability to garner popular support from urban-based Canadians. In Ontario, as later events testified, the wilderness movement needed a "crisis" close to the urban core in order to

achieve substantial political influence. In a profound manner, the city was able to damage (vividly) the wilderness; in an instrumental sense, the city also provided the necessities for a more popularly based wilderness movement: the news media and voters. Although some American conservationists, like Frank Hubachek, slowly recognized these political limitations, the crusaders obviously were powerless to accelerate the process of urban sprawl essential for the emergence of an indigenous wilderness movement.

Without popular Canadian support, the QSC stumbled during the 1930s and 1940s. Acting on the advice of several observers in Ontario, the council sought to gain the support of the Lands and Forests Minister and successive provincial Premiers. Canadians who offered their advice to the QSC included noted historian and civil servant Lawrence J. Burpee, Vincent Massey, first Canadian Minister to Washington (1926-1930), Duncan McArthur, Ontario's Deputy Minister of Education, John Read at the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa, publisher Clifford Sifton and Toronto lawyer Harold C. Walker. Burpee's admirable efforts are instructive. In 1935 he convinced a variety of distinguished Canadians to serve on a proposed Canadian Advisory Board; the Board's inactivity rendered it virtually useless to the QSC. Burpee also penned editorials on behalf of the program for Canadian Geographic, and the Canadian





Forestry Association's Illustrated Forest and Outdoors, but the limited circulation of these periodicals, to say nothing of the worsening Depression, precluded a substantial public response.<sup>17</sup>

Burpee, the former first Canadian Secretary of the IJC, also arranged for Oberholtzer to speak before the Canadian Institute at Toronto's University Club in March 1935. Although the foray provided some Canadian contacts for Oberholtzer, they were of little use politically as these academics "pretty well have their hands tied by their University work except in a quiet way." External Affairs official John Read offered perhaps the most damaging advice. In January 1935 he told Burpee that he did "not see any very serious difficulties in the way of a treaty". Other legal opinions were few and far between. Unfortunately, the QSC eagerly elevated Read's opinion to an unshakeable tenet of faith -- this inadvertent blessing accounts for much of the conservationists' subsequent blindness to critics of the treaty idea in Canada and the United States.<sup>18</sup>

Poor advice aside, the QSC's approach of attempting to persuade Ontario officials through politically well-placed contacts bore little fruit until the 1950s largely due to the absence of indigenous political pressure in the province and because the council repeatedly broached the irritating treaty issue whenever the opportunity arose. In addition, the celebrated feud between Ontario Premier Mitch

Hepburn and Prime Minister Mackenzie King virtually destroyed any prospects that the two levels of government might co-operate on the QSC treaty proposal. Finally, whereas the Ontario portion of the watershed was mostly Crown-owned land, nearly one million acres of land within the Superior National Forest were still privately owned. These properties would have to be purchased, at great expense, before any treaty could be completed. Recognizing that such a repurchasing programme was unlikely during the depths of the Depression, Minister Peter Heenan informed Oberholtzer in 1936 that he wished to hear no more about a treaty "until the United States has completed ownership on the Minnesota side."<sup>19</sup>

In the late 1930s, Oberholtzer was bitterly disappointed over the failure to elicit a positive response from provincial cabinet ministers. He identified Deputy Minister Walter C. Cain as the villain, an "old type of beaurocrat [sic] who is in closest confidence with the lumbermen and lower people." This interpretation infected historian R. Newell Searle in the 1970s, who explained Ontario's opposition to the treaty as the work of a reactionary Deputy Minister and governments "still dominated by lumbermen."<sup>20</sup> Both Searle and Oberholtzer were mistaken. Since the QSC's first contact with the Department of Lands and Forests in the autumn of 1927, it was clear that jurisdictional complications and the tenacity of provincial

officials to retain control over the Quetico were at the heart of government opposition. Moreover, as we shall see below, Ontario officials sympathized with the conservationist goals of the QSC plan.

### III

Although the QSC was stymied on the proposed treaty, the Department of Lands and Forests (DLF) gradually incorporated several aspects of the council's programme in the management of Quetico Park. This "limited success"<sup>21</sup> evolved because of three different influences: continuous lobbying by the QSC, the economic self-interests of local northwestern Ontario communities and the conservation experience of Deputy Minister Frank A. MacDougall (1941-1966). MacDougall's impact on park policy in Ontario was enormous.

The policies Frank MacDougall had implemented as superintendent of Algonquin Park (1931 to 1941) -- keeping a roadless and lease-free wilderness interior, establishing no-cut scenic reserves along shorelines and portages, creating nature reserves, and initiating scientific fish and wildlife management programmes -- were as advanced as those being promoted by the QSC for the Rainy Lake watershed. MacDougall had developed this multiple use philosophy by studying the ideas and policies of Algonquin's founders and early superintendents, American National Park and Forest Service administrators, and a small group of naturalists and

foresters at the University of Toronto. By 1917 multiple use was firmly entrenched within the U.S. Forest Service as the overriding approach to management. This approach entailed balancing several goals -- timber production, watershed protection and grazing -- to ensure the "greatest good for the greatest number". Faced with increasing conflicts between resource users in the 1920s, the Service had expanded its multiple use doctrine to include recreation. MacDougall recognized that this philosophy had considerable relevance for Algonquin Park. During the 1930s, the superintendent modified this doctrine to favour the more delicate scenic and recreational values in Algonquin, in the event of a clash.<sup>22</sup>

In 1937 MacDougall's success in resolving conflicts between loggers and recreationists prompted George Delahey, District Forester at Fort Frances, to apply similar policies in Quetico Park. For aesthetic reasons, Delahey reserved from cutting the shorelines of several lakes adjacent to well-travelled canoe routes along the international boundary. When MacDougall became Deputy Minister in 1941, he decided to extend this policy and "to have the logging in the Quetico managed in the same manner as in the Algonquin Park." MacDougall instructed his field staff to place a 300' no-cut reserve "on the shorelines of [all] lakes and main canoe routes" and portages in Quetico Park. A year later, the results of this new policy were evident. Ernest

Oberholtzer paddled Crooked Lake and wrote to the DLF: "I wish to compliment you very highly on the improvement over previous operations anywhere in Quetico Park. I saw no logging dams or flooded shores. I saw no islands that had been logged ... [T]here was a real effort to protect shoreline timber and usually with much success."<sup>23</sup>

Not surprisingly, the Quetico-Superior Council thought that they had an ally in Frank MacDougall. Perhaps this was the Ontario official who would extend Quetico Park to include all or most of the Ontario portion of the Rainy Lake watershed, and protect the area under international treaty. Meetings with MacDougall and the new Lands and Forests Minister N.O. Hipel in late 1941 soon disabused the American conservationists of this notion. Still, they were encouraged by the "friendly and co-operative" reception they received in Toronto. Kenneth Reid of the Izaak Walton League found that the QSC and the Ontario government agreed "in all essentials of management policies ... for both sides of the border." Not only were the Ontarians determined to protect aesthetic values, they planned to achieve sustained yield forestry in the park, and intended to extend to Quetico the zoning policies already in place in Algonquin Park. Any future roads, resort and cottage developments in Quetico would be kept close to the northern park boundary, leaving the interior in a state of wilderness. Lands and Forests Minister Hipel concluded the discussions with the

Americans in January 1942 by instructing Regional Forester W.D. Cram to meet biannually with his counterpart in the U.S. Forest Service, Jay H. Price, to co-ordinate management policies within Quetico Park and the Superior National Forest. For all intents and purposes, the basis of the formal agreement eventually reached in 1960 was now in place.<sup>24</sup>

By the early 1940s, then, the QSC had very little to complain about when it considered the performance of Ontario officials in managing the border lakes region. One reason, among many, seems to stand out in accounting for this apparent harmony. Frank MacDougall and the Quetico-Superior Council shared a similar philosophy -- one dominated by multiple use principles. Given MacDougall's longevity and his powerful position within the Department of Lands and Forests, it is not surprising that the multiple use approach to wildlands management remained firmly entrenched in Ontario until the mid-1960s.

The QSC's concept of wilderness did make allowance for some modern conveniences, provided they were excluded from the interior lakes in Quetico-Superior. Oberholtzer's scheme in 1927 restricted access roads, luxury tourist resorts, and fishing expeditions in pontoon-equipped aircraft to peripheral areas surrounding the primitive core. In the mid-to-late 1940s, however, the QSC was forced to wage furious battles, especially in the United States, to

protect the wilderness interior from these three threats. As the post-war recreational boom placed great pressures on the border lakes region, the very concept of wilderness championed by the conservationists was placed in jeopardy.

The first threat was the growing proliferation of "fly-in" commercial outfitters. These interests operated two dozen floatplanes roaring out of Ely, Minnesota, carrying weekend fishermen deep into the interior, disturbing the sense of primitiveness, quiet seclusion and physically challenging access which many wilderness buffs demanded. The second threat was the concomitant rise in the number of elaborate tourist lodges constructed on the interior lakes of the Superior Forest, designed to cater to the burgeoning "fly-in" business. The third threat involved the route of a long-awaited Canadian access highway to Quetico Park, which the QSC feared might bisect the heart of the wilderness. Led by veteran activist Sigurd F. Olson, the QSC successfully defeated these challenges to their wilderness concept.

First, the conservationists tapped appropriate private and public sources to repurchase privately-owned lands within the roadless areas of the Superior Forest, aided by funds from the Izaak Walton League and the federal Thye-Blatnik Act (1948) which provided \$500,000. Consistent with previous policy, and explicitly sanctioned by the citizens of northwestern Ontario, the provincial government

co-operated by continuing to maintain a lease-free interior in Quetico Park. The "air ban war" culminated in 1949 with an executive order signed by President Harry S. Truman, prohibiting aircraft navigation below 4,000' over the Roadless Areas, effective in 1951. Ontario followed suit after the U.S. judicial system had upheld the ban, and on 3 March 1955 private aircraft landings in Quetico were restricted to six lakes on the park's perimeter. Third, again responding to public opinion in northwestern Ontario, the government postponed a decision on the Canadian access road into the Quetico until returning war veterans might have an opportunity to express their opinions about a potential Canadian outfitting industry in the area. These were all major victories for the conservationists. During this period, the QSC sought and won bans on three other practices: the caching of canoes and boats on interior lakes for future use, the physical improvement of portage paths beyond the simple removal of heavy logs, and prospecting or mining operations.<sup>25</sup>

The Quetico-Superior Council had waged war against these incursions of modern, mechanized civilization into the heart of the border lakeland simply because such activities offended their sensitive concept of wilderness. The urgency and tenacity of purpose exhibited by the conservationists was fundamentally the result of cultural factors. Prominent among these was an awareness of the American record in



squandering wilderness resources for economic gain. Ernest Oberholtzer feared in 1927 that "you Canadians are so eager for industrial development ... that you will sign away a precious heritage to anyone that will promise expansion. You are in much the same position as our western states before railways were built. Whole kingdoms were given away to attract capital for railroad construction ... [a]nd the result is that these states ... are paying now bitterly for their heedlessness." Olaus J. Murie, Director of the U.S. Wilderness Society, put it more bluntly when he explained his sense of urgency to Premier George Drew in 1946: "Canada has a unique opportunity to study our blunders and our groping efforts to make amends, and to profit by the mistakes we have made."<sup>28</sup>

These attitudes were popular legacies of an "intellectual change in temper or mood" in the United States at the turn of the century. As historian Roderick Nash has pointed out, Americans at that time (especially historian Frederick Jackson Turner) feared the cultural consequences of the closing of the frontier. Urbanization had fuelled the destruction of the wilderness. One corollary of this "crisis" was the enduring belief that the city undermined true Republican democracy. The city was seen by some intellectuals as the crucible of many social evils -- corruption, immorality, a loss of physical toughness, <sup>and</sup> declining individualism. Out of this intellectual ferment

emerged a sizeable "wilderness cult" whose ideals were fully embraced by preservationists like Murie and Oberholtzer. The antidote to urbanization, an implicit tenet of the preservationist creed from the outset, was clearly defined by the QSC's Frank Hubachek: "The task of wilderness preservation is to erect a high wall of clear public consciousness that these urban influences must stop along a given line. That will be a very difficult task."<sup>27</sup> In Ontario, this task was extremely difficult, given the relatively lighter impact of urbanization than in the United States and the perceived existence of unlimited wildland in Canada. Despite the admirable zeal of the QSC, and given the enormous differences in cultural and material development across the international border, the fact that much of the Quetico-Superior programme was de facto in place by the 1950s is rather remarkable. Without the political and administrative will within the Department of Lands and Forests to maintain the Quetico in a wilderness state, it seems unlikely that the QSC would have had any success in Ontario.

#### IV

The controversy over the Canadian access highway allowed moderates within the Quetico-Superior movement, such as Minnesota's Conservation Commissioner, Chester S. Wilson, to recast the original QSC plan into a politically palatable form acceptable to politicians, local economic interests and

conservationists alike. Wilson was motivated by a strong states-rights position which rejected the centralist-federalist bias of Oberholtzer's programme. Particularly repugnant to Minnesota officials was the idea of handing over title to the extensive state forests in the watershed. Instead, appealing to tourism-conscious citizens in northwestern Ontario, Wilson won public support for a more practical version of the plan which called for a wilderness zone only one-fifth the size of the entire watershed -- the federally owned Roadless Areas in the Superior Forest and the large interior zone in Quetico Park known as Hunter's Island.<sup>28</sup> The compromise plan, although initially splitting the Quetico-Superior movement, represented no departure from the multiple use concept of wilderness promoted by the QSC. It merely reduced the planning area in question and guaranteed the establishment of a peripheral development zone which Oberholtzer had proposed in his original scheme. By endorsing local aspirations for a Fort Frances-to-Port Arthur highway, running north of Quetico Park, Wilson allayed long-standing fears that the Americans intended to continue their monopoly on the outfitting industry. With the consent of local economic interests, formal planning for the new highway was not far in the future.

While the original QSC scheme was being modified into a more politically acceptable roadless areas policy, the council did not abandon its goal of protecting the

entire watershed by formal treaty. However, its efforts to produce broad Canadian support for the plan failed miserably in the 1940s. The activists never had a formal strategy of attack during these years and, aside from lobbying senior civil servants and cabinet ministers, they simply preached to the "converted" (conservationists, sportsmen and naturalists) at tiny gatherings in various Ontario cities. At best, these talks produced endorsements from politically weak constituencies -- a resolution passed by the fledgling Canadian Conservation Association in 1942 is one example. At worst, these speeches alienated Lands and Forests personnel by implying that government policy for Quetico was "short-sighted [and] wasteful". Oberholtzer touched off a storm of protest from the lakehead in 1942 when his talk at the CCA conference again argued for an extension of the park to cover the entire watershed -- without any mention of an access highway which the local population desired. These speaking engagements gained further contacts but the public remained indifferent to the QSC.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, insightful suggestions by some Canadian contacts were simply ignored. J.R. Dickson, a forest engineer with the federal Department of Mines and Resources, echoed earlier advice in 1944 when he questioned the need for a treaty. A "simple agreement, under which Uncle Sam and Jack Canuck would ... give their combined blessing to the plan ... might be all that is needed," he

wrote. Oberholtzer rejected the suggestion. By 1945, his intransigence over the size of the sanctuary and the treaty proposal had clearly alienated DLF officials. One American observer explained with a Shakespearean twist that "every time, the spectre of a treaty ... appears like Banquo's ghost at the banquet and co-operation by Ontario goes dead."<sup>30</sup>

During the 1940s, two Canadians worked diligently in Ontario on behalf of the council. Both had begun to take an active interest in the wilderness movement during the early forties -- Clifford Sifton, who controlled a string of newspapers and radio stations, and Harold C. Walker, a prominent Toronto lawyer whom Charles Kelly had met while on business in Toronto. The Canadian recruits claimed impressive pedigrees. Sifton's father had been Minister of the Interior in Laurier's government, and had chaired the Commission on Conservation (1909). Walker's father, Sir Byron Edmund Walker, had been President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce (1907-24), a founder of the Champlain Society (1905), a patron of the arts, and an early proponent of scientific forestry. Sifton and Walker, second generation affluent, were both capable administrators and shrewd businessmen. They were also "quiet" men who preferred to work behind the scenes. Their chief contribution at this stage was to arrange a series of meetings between QSC representatives, cabinet members, and senior civil servants.

In 1947, acting on the advice of Vincent Massey, then Chancellor of the University of Toronto, the two conservationists attempted to raise the matter of a treaty through formal diplomatic channels -- a tactic which had failed in the 1930s. When the American State Department inquired if the Canadian Government would be willing to establish a Governor-General's committee to investigate the treaty proposal, Ontario Premier George Drew's Conservative government dismissed the idea. Provincial hostility towards a binding treaty had not changed.<sup>31</sup>

In March 1949, the tiny band of activists in Ontario temporarily put aside their treaty aspirations and rekindled their efforts to establish an indigenous wilderness organization. Aided by a letter of support from Columbia President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Vincent Massey persuaded thirty-one businessmen and intellectuals to form the Canadian Quetico-Superior Committee, the first wilderness organization in Ontario.<sup>32</sup> All were powerful men with access to the Premier's office. Many of these individuals had close connections with the Conservative Party, and were heavily involved in large business interests, especially the extraction and processing of natural resources. In contrast to their American counterparts, however, the Canadian QSC chose not to assume the posture of an aggressive, high-profile, political pressure group. Instead, they preferred

to work behind the scenes and to exert their influence directly on the new Premier of Ontario, Leslie M. Frost.

The new wilderness association scheduled a meeting with Frost and Minister of Lands and Forests H.R. Scott for 26 July 1949 at the Toronto home of Donald M. Hogarth, President of Steep Rock Mine in Atikokan, and one of the Canadian QSC founders. To prepare the groundwork for this meeting, newspaper editor Oakley Dalgleish, another founder, printed an illustrated feature article on the QSC programme in the Globe and Mail. A week later, on the day of the meeting, he ran an editorial endorsing the QSC project. At the Hogarth home that evening, the Premier talked at length with committee members. As a keen outdoorsman and history buff, he expressed interest in protecting the country of the voyageurs. Sigurd Olson screened the film "Wilderness Canoe Country" and presented Frost with a personal copy. The Premier listened sympathetically to the wildland enthusiasts and left the impression that he "could see no reason why the international program should not be completed." Subsequently, Frost asked Canadian Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent to open communications with the American government. "I should like to know just what the State Department has in mind if anything," he wrote to St. Laurent.<sup>33</sup>

In response to Frost's initiative, the American government forwarded to him a draft "Treaty for the Establishment of an International Peace Memorial Forest in

the Quetico-Superior Area." Written largely by Ernest Oberholtzer, and revised by the American State Department, the document reached the Ontario government in January 1950. The draft treaty called for the joint management of the Rainy Lake and Pigeon River watersheds "to perpetuate the wilderness character of the region". Despite its many virtues, the document had no chance of being signed since it proposed to obligate the Canadian and American governments to establish an advisory committee to oversee joint management of the region. The QSC bungled by specifying that the dominion cabinet would appoint the Canadian representatives to the committee, a proposal sure to have caused much gnashing of teeth in the Ontario government. If Premier Frost had initially been open-minded about a treaty, he now was totally opposed to the idea. His legal advisors warned that the arrangement would "tie the hands" of his government in administering Quetico Park. Further doubts and outright hostility to the treaty proposal surfaced.<sup>34</sup>

In March 1950, Harold Walker argued unconvincingly before the Fish and Game Committee of the provincial legislature that the treaty would "not involve the surrender of sovereignty, management or jurisdiction". The scepticism of MPPs in Toronto was supplemented by a scathing attack on the treaty launched by the influential Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce and the Northern Ontario Outfitters Association. Both groups feared that



international control might jeopardize the construction of the Canadian access highway north of the park and forestall an imminent tourism boom.<sup>35</sup> The Canadian QSC remained remarkably insensitive to the realities of dominion-provincial relations, and greatly overestimated their ability to influence public policy. Eighteen years later, in 1967, Walker confessed how politically naive he had been at the time and "how very little" he had known "about finding the ropes to be pulled, let alone how they could be pulled when found. It wasn't obvious to me that even a polite request from Ottawa might cause Queen's Park to condemn the whole project from the beginning."<sup>36</sup>

Faced with such stiff opposition to the treaty proposal, the Canadian QSC decided to reassess its strategy. This task fell to the new executive secretary of the committee, Donald P. O'Hearn, who obtained access to the DLF's files on Quetico Park because of his experience in the parliamentary press gallery where he had won the confidence of Leslie Frost. The file did not make for pleasant reading. O'Hearn reported that nowhere in the Ontario government was there any sympathy for the concept of a Canadian-American treaty. "The initial suggestion ... that the Dominion should take over the land" had left a lasting negative impression on provincial officials in Toronto. The implication, for Lands and Forests personnel, was that the province could not be trusted to protect the Quetico region.

Worst of all, O'Hearn noted, Premier Frost had already "made up his mind that the [QSC] project, particularly the treaty aspect, wasn't feasible." Frost told O'Hearn repeatedly that "the province would do 'acre for acre' what the U.S. did," but "that 'Old Man Ontario would not give away control of his land.'" Based on his findings, O'Hearn recommended a "practical politics" strategy, similar to the compromise plan advocated by Minnesota's Chester Wilson. O'Hearn urged his employers to put aside the treaty idea and to cultivate "sympathetic opinion" on the Ontario side of the watershed, by endorsing any reasonable projects proposed by the local interests, including the projected highway from Fort Frances to Port Arthur. In the end, the Canadian QSC wisely accepted this strategy.<sup>37</sup>

## V

Just when the conservationists were poised for a significant breakthrough in Ontario, a strange episode unfolded which threatened to destroy their political position, their ambitious plans, and the wilderness itself. Sigurd Olson's diplomatic expertise solved the crisis. Olson was well-suited for the task. The most influential preservationist of his generation (1899-1982), Olson wore many hats well -- wilderness guide, ecologist, philosopher, author, publicist, lobbyist, educator and public speaker. His personal wilderness philosophy was equally diverse, embracing a range of values from the spiritual to the

practical. Olson knew Quetico-Superior intimately, having canoed tens of thousands of miles in the region since the 1920s. The Minnesotan subscribed to the QSC's multiple use compromise only reluctantly, to gain some protection for the wilderness, although privately he favoured eliminating logging, commercial properties, and outboard motors.<sup>38</sup>

In 1951, Olson discovered that Steep Rock Iron Mines in Atikokan, Ontario -- whose President was the Canadian QSC's Donald P. Hogarth -- was spewing an effluent of taconite particles into the border lakes. The pollution appeared as "a long tongue of milky brown color extending from the mouth of the Seine River" westward towards Rainy Lake. Citizens in northwestern Ontario, shocked by this spreading sludge, rightly accused the QSC of hypocrisy: where were the usually outspoken wilderness crusaders, now that one of their own had threatened the wilderness? They were conspicuous by their silence. The potential for environmental damage was enormous. Moreover, the integrity of the border lakes as a recreational magnet was at stake, as were the livelihoods of hundreds of people dependent on tourism. Happily, Olson defused the crisis. First, in several private meetings, he convinced Hogarth and his successor, M.S. "Pop" Fotheringham, to investigate technical methods of eliminating the effluent. An effective solution was in place by 1953. Second, through carefully worded bulletins and letters to local newspaper editors, Olson

minimized the negative impact of the crisis on the fledgling Canadian QSC.<sup>38</sup> As cooler heads prevailed, local power brokers were able to focus their attention elsewhere.

Premier Frost desired a firm expression of local sentiment on the future of Quetico Park. Donald O'Hearn, eager to implement his new strategy, shared this enthusiasm. Thus, in September 1952, with the support and active involvement of the Canadian QSC in the person of "Pop" Fotheringham, the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce struck a "Quetico Committee" to fashion a management plan for the new highway corridor. This committee submitted its final report in the spring of 1954. In August, at the opening of the Fort William-Atikokan highway, Lands and Forests Minister Clare Mapledoran announced a new government policy for Quetico Park, based on the citizen-sponsored plan and consistent with previous departmental decisions. The minister upheld the existing ban on cottages and resorts in the park. Provision for these developments would continue to be made in lakes to the north of Quetico and contiguous to the new highway. Access roads from the highway would not be permitted to penetrate the park interior and a "modern public camping ground" would be constructed at the French Lake entrance. Logging operations within the park and surrounding areas would be strictly controlled to preserve recreational values, chiefly through shoreline reserves on "all lakes and streams,

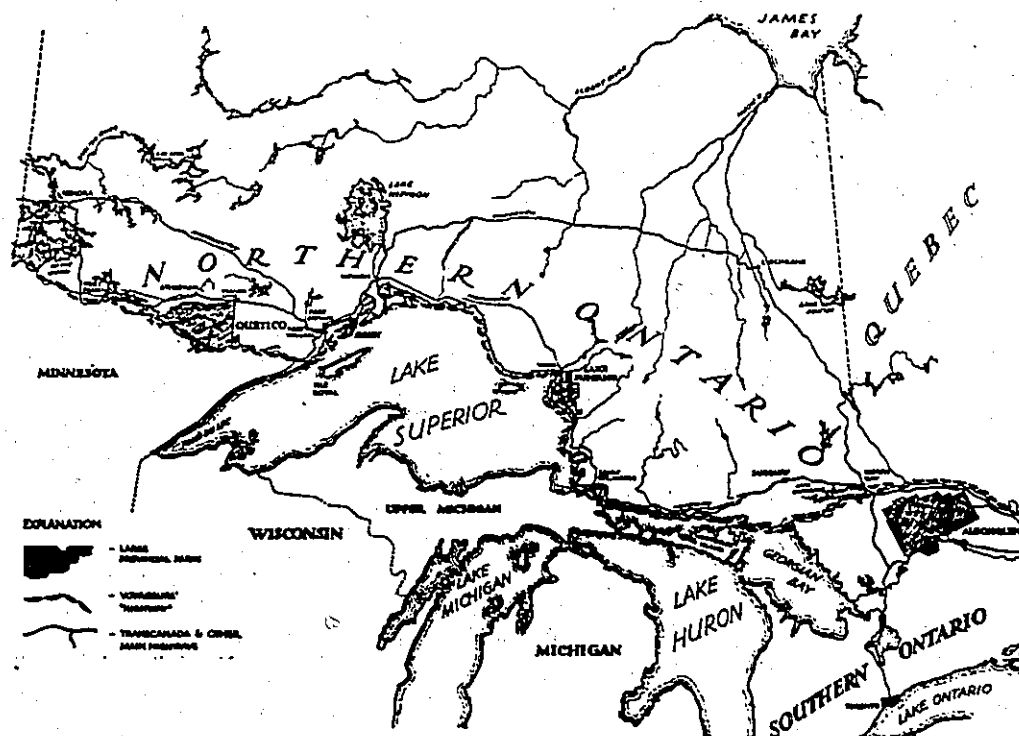
islands and portages." Actually, logging was not a pressing issue at this time since the licencees had ceased operations in the Quetico in 1946 and would not return until 1961.<sup>40</sup>

In two major respects, the 1954 policy fell short of Oberholtzer's original scheme. Mapledoram echoed his predecessors when he thundered that "This great natural park will be controlled and operated by the province of Ontario. It will not be an international proposition." Second, the restrictions outlined did not apply to the remainder of the watershed. Nevertheless, the QSC seemed pleased. Publicly, Donald O'Hearn wrote that the DLF had established "nearly as ironclad protection as one could ask for." Privately, however, he was incensed that Mapledoram had alluded to previous QSC proposals for "international control and operation" of Quetico Park. He wrote a scathing note to the minister, claiming incorrectly that there never had been "any suggestion" of that nature, and wondered why "this fact won't seem to sink in" -- whether it was "suspicion, stupidity or straight ornryness [sic]." This denial, part of O'Hearn's new strategy to de-emphasize the treaty, belied the QSC's continued commitment to obtain an international agreement, sometime in the future.<sup>41</sup>

The wilderness crusaders capped off their success in October 1954 when they received a charter for the Quetico Foundation, a "non-profit organization ... to encourage financially and otherwise, educational and scientific

projects" to increase public awareness about the Quetico region. This was not a pressure group of wild-eyed radicals, or anti-government activists. Its board of directors was comprised of members of the Canadian QSC and the Quetico Committee of Northwestern Ontario. By the late 1950s, the rolls included sportsmen, naturalists, outfitters, businessmen, academics, politicians, financiers, scientists, lawyers, publishers, editors, accountants, journalists and corporate giants. In 1955, the DLF's Parks Chief warned that the "Quetico Foundation will require watching, to see that they don't disseminate publicity ... at variance with Departmental policy." However, the organization quickly won the confidence of the department. In June 1956, Clare Mapledoram asked the foundation "to extend its activities to all wilderness parks and areas in the province." The foundation then became a "watchdog for wilderness" in Ontario, committed to the development of "a clear, comprehensive, and positive wilderness parks policy," particularly concerning Algonquin, Lake Superior and Sibley provincial parks.<sup>42</sup> In this expanded role, the foundation had three important accomplishments.

First, the group educated a small portion of the Ontario public about the need for wilderness conservation. In the mid-1950s, for example, Sigurd Olson led a small coterie of friends -- the "Voyageur Group" -- on a series of well-publicized canoe trips in the border lakes. Through



MAP LOCATING ONTARIO'S FOUR LARGE PROVINCIAL WILDERNESS PARKS: ALGONQUIN, QUETICO, LAKE SUPERIOR, & SIBLEY.

MAP 1.2: from Emerson S. Coatsworth, "Wilderness Preservation in Ontario", reprinted from Living Wilderness (Spring-Summer, 1981), 5, copy in SFO, 32.B.5.8F, box 25, corresp. and misc. files.

jointly-sponsored research projects, the publication of books, magazine articles, the Quetico Newsletter, and the production and distribution of Christopher Chapman's award-winning film, "Quetico" (1958), some Canadians finally "discovered" the region.<sup>43</sup>

Second, the group nurtured a climate of opinion within government circles conducive to the protection of wildlands. The foundation submitted briefs to the DLF which facilitated a review of park policy. One submission in 1959 argued for an expansion of some existing parks and the reservation of over 3 million acres of Crown land in northern Ontario "for future wilderness park needs." Several statements in the late 1950s revealed that the department was "beginning to appreciate the wilderness for the benefits it can bestow on civilized man". One anonymous DLF official paid lip-service to the virtue of renewed "physical stamina" -- which could increase the "level of health, vigor, and general well-being" of the population. This anachronistic reference was related to notions of national strength, once associated with social Darwinism. Directives to field officers and speeches to development groups affirmed that the DLF would "ensure that great areas of the north shall remain in perpetuity in a state of nature." The rationale for these motherhood statements was explicit. As Mapledoram told a meeting of sportsmen in 1956, the department now recognized that wilderness "is one



of our really exclusive marketable commodities". The foundation encouraged this thinking by explaining how the "wilderness core of a region acts as a magnet for all types of visitors" which "contribute handsomely to the region's economy." To this generation of conservationists, "wilderness parks" would "only yield returns if they are actively used". Similarly, Parks Chief W. Ben Greenwood was more concerned with "means of milking the golden cow" of Quetico, rather than discussing whether there were "ten U.S. commercial resorts against the International border, or two hundred." Another departmental forester could "not see that Ontario has any responsibility to maintain an unused wilderness" in the Quetico, "unless it pays us more money than other uses."<sup>44</sup>

Such utilitarian attitudes did not mean that conservationists or civil servants were insincere about protecting wilderness for aesthetic or intangible values; economic imperatives simply received greater emphasis. This trend was reflected in Ontario parks policy which, before 1960, was dominated by the struggle to provide recreational facilities for a burgeoning population and to secure financial revenue from resources, rather than the protection of natural heritage. These priorities, in turn, reflected the public mood of the 1950s, an era dominated by an ethic of virtually unrestricted and seemingly limitless economic development. The third major accomplishment of the

foundation also reflected an accepted norm in 1950s Ontario -- that of quiet diplomacy between conservationists and government agencies. Members of the foundation successfully promoted joint meetings between officials of the DLF and the U.S. Forest Service, thereby helping to shape management policies in Quetico-Superior.<sup>45</sup>

The philosophy of the Quetico Foundation was well articulated. The foundation was dedicated "to the preservation of wilderness areas for recreation and scientific use". Specifically, the group held that:

recreation that comes from living in our wilderness country ... is gaining greater significance than ever before ... The Foundation also believes that greater use of our wilderness areas will bring greater appreciation of their many scenic, historical, recreational and scientific values, and that this appreciation is the most effective way by which these values may be preserved.<sup>46</sup>

This philosophy mirrored that of the American QSC. Despite an inaccurately titled promotional article, "Wilderness Preservation in Ontario" (1961), the province's first wilderness organization and its American cousins were conservationists, not preservationists. The crucial distinction reflects the foundation's acceptance of commercial logging, tempered by shoreline reservations, and allowing resorts albeit in peripheral zones. This position was in sharp contrast to preservationists of the post-1960 period who rejected any major interference with the ecological integrity of wildlands.<sup>47</sup>

While a majority of the foundation's development-conscious members heartily endorsed the status quo, a small minority ascribed only reluctantly to the multiple use compromise. In 1941-2, before the loggers temporarily ceased operations in Quetico Park, Oberholtzer privately expressed doubts about modern, mechanized logging. The gradual shift in focus from sawn timber towards pulpwood was responsible for harvests "even more destructive" than before, he wrote. Regulations might restrict the timbermen to selective cutting of mature trees, but "by the time the 7-ton trucks get through crashing through the woods, the proportion of trees that they have destroyed may rank high with the actual logging." Indeed, "modern logging, which is done as much as possible with the aid of machinery and which uses nearly everything," left fewer seed trees, and shoreline reserves too thin to withstand the force of winds.<sup>48</sup>

By the 1950s, Oberholtzer also found it "difficult to reconcile the apparent inconsistency between forbidding more development and retaining what one has -- between banning new roads of access, for instance, and calling an old one good because it has been in use so long." Multiple use at least suggested a "firmly established priority for the intangible wilderness values" which would otherwise be lost. Sigurd Olson had always been a reluctant promoter of multiple use, and he privately opposed logging and

motorboats. Gradually, others like Frank Hubachek, Donald O'Hearn and Harold Walker agreed with Olson. However, the absence of logging in Quetico Park until 1961 left this nagging dissatisfaction unresolved, an issue with which the next generation of conservationists would grapple. The foundation's significant contribution was that it had articulated the need to conserve wilderness in Ontario. In doing so, it had challenged the long standing myth of an unlimited abundance of wildland in this province, a myth that had been publicly recited by a senior lands and forests wildlife expert as late as 1952.<sup>49</sup>

The success of the Quetico Foundation was matched by a warming of the political climate between the President's Quetico-Superior Committee and DLF officials. After so many years, the American conservationists finally convinced provincial officials of their good intentions. The turning point came during a meeting held at Basswood Lake in 1955 where Charles Kelly impressed Ontario Parks Chief Ben Greenwood. Kelly mapped out the progress made by American authorities to repurchase private lands within the roadless areas of the Superior National Forest. These private holdings had been reduced from 350,000 to 55,000 acres since the late 1940s. After the meeting, Greenwood reported that he saw "no reason why this U.S. Committee should be looked upon with suspicion." By 1957, all but two per cent (30,000 acres) of the roadless areas lay under public ownership.

This progress demonstrated that the Americans had been sincere all along about their commitment to restoring the interior lakes to primitive status. The warm relationship with Greenwood led to continued co-operation between the various government agencies in managing Quetico-Superior and also emboldened the Canadian wilderness crusaders to make one last attempt at gaining support for the well-worn treaty idea.<sup>50</sup>

The final episode in the crusade to establish a peace memorial forest in Quetico-Superior by international treaty was engineered by Harold Walker, Don O'Hearn, Sig Olson, Frank Hubachek and Charles Kelly. The plan was to obtain the support of major interest groups in northwestern Ontario for a harmless sounding resolution which called for an "international agreement" to protect "for all time the finest canoe country in the world." The word treaty was carefully avoided. At a meeting of the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce in Sioux Lookout during August 1957, the motion failed to gain the mandatory unanimous support by one vote. Despite this setback, the conservationists were cheered when their resolution was endorsed by the annual convention of the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. However, the wheels fell off the campaign when, at the Port Arthur meeting of the Northwest Ontario Municipal Association, DLF Minister Mapledoram and W.G. Noden, MPP for Rainy River, attacked the resolution and

forced its withdrawal without a vote. The politicians had discovered that the term "international agreement" was simply a euphemism for "treaty". After a thirty year struggle, the wilderness crusaders finally threw in the towel on their grand scheme.<sup>51</sup>

In the wake of this defeat in late 1957, moderate elements within the Quetico-Superior movement fell back on an alternative proposal -- a diplomatic exchange of letters between the Ontario and American governments committing each jurisdiction to co-operate in working out, informally, through biannual meetings of a joint advisory committee, common management policies for the wilderness areas on both sides of the border. This pragmatic proposal, without the binding arrangement or jurisdictional complexities of the treaty bogey, was quickly accepted by all. Through the office of the Hon. Howard C. Green, Canada's Secretary of State for External Affairs, negotiations for the exchange of letters were conducted with the American State Department. The issue was finally laid to rest on 12 April 1960 when announcements of the exchange occurred in Washington and Queen's Park, Toronto.<sup>52</sup>

Premier Leslie Frost informed the legislature that he had "objected very strenuously" to a treaty; Ontario "would retain complete control of the Quetico area." The Premier had agreed to establish a Quetico-Superior International Joint Advisory Committee, comprised of three

Ontarians and three Americans, to exchange information and discuss mutual problems. "Now our sole obligation is this," emphasized Frost, "that if we change policy at any time, we give notification of that to the American committee, so that we are not doing things which are running counter to what they are attempting to do on their side. Likewise, they would give us notice of any changes that would apply on their side." Through such "friendly co-operation, without binding either side to any policy," Frost concluded, "we can work out policies which will be of benefit to both sides of the line." His optimism was shared by Charles Kelly who believed that Frost had committed his government to the protection of wilderness "almost as fully as if we had obtained the treaty."<sup>53</sup>

Actually, Frost had simply confirmed the longstanding practice of previous administrations. Since 1927, Ontario's politicians and civil servants had indicated that they would act in concert with the Americans in managing Quetico-Superior. Blinded by their obsession with the ultimate objective of a formal treaty to protect the Rainy Lake watershed, the more zealous American conservationists had repeatedly alienated provincial officials who otherwise supported their goals. As misunderstandings multiplied, some QSC leaders overlooked the fundamental agreement on major policy issues between the

conservationists and the Ontarians. For too long, tactical errors, excessive pride, self-righteousness and ignorance of dominion-provincial relations -- the latter also suffered by a few influential Canadian businessmen and lawyers who should have known better -- stood in the way of the kind of agreement reached in 1960. Instead, it took three decades of frustration for the QSC to recognize that its disagreements with the province did not involve the question of whether or not to protect wilderness values; the quarrel revolved around the treaty or sovereignty issue. In Ontario, the biggest obstacle faced by the Quetico-Superior crusaders had been self-imposed. When they de-emphasized the treaty proposition, and finally abandoned the idea, they encountered a receptive audience in the province.

This battle had an important influence on several key civil servants within the provincial parks bureaucracy and on the conservationist lobby. By 1960 the need for large wilderness areas for recreational use was undisputed within the ranks of Ontario's Parks Division. The multiple use concept championed by the Quetico Foundation remained a fundamental planning tool for the bureaucrats and foresters who were charged with managing these natural environments. It was this concept of wilderness which a new generation of preservationists attacked in the late 1960s, triggering an unprecedented public outcry over logging in parks like Algonquin, Quetico and Lake Superior. Before such an attack



could be launched, however, the Ontario wilderness movement would have to enter an entirely different phase.

After 1960, the era of quiet diplomacy as a modus operandi for conservation groups was eclipsed. Impatient advocates, frustrated by a lack of progress on the establishment of wilderness parks in Ontario, shunned the foundation's "old-boy" network -- the top-down approach -- as a means of influencing government policy. Instead, this new generation focused on cultivating grass-roots support for their goals, reflecting the changing socio-economic circumstances in Ontario society. Armed with dissenting views on wildlands management, a heightened urgency about deteriorating environmental conditions, and a readiness to exercise the citizen's right to criticize public policy through the mass-media, these young turks began a new phase of advocacy. The Quetico-Superior campaign, then, laid the foundations for the more broadly-based preservationist battles of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

<sup>1</sup>R. Newell Searle, Saving Quetico-Superior: A Land Set Apart (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1977), ch. 3.

<sup>2</sup>See Roderick Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind revised edition (New Haven and London, 1973), chs. 9-10 for the "wilderness cult" and the Hetch Hetchy controversy. For the roads controversy see Donald Nicholas Baldwin, The Quiet Revolution: Grass Roots of Today's Wilderness Preservation Movement (Boulder, Colo., 1972), 100, 128-51, 142-3, and Searle, Saving Quetico-Superior, ch. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Searle, Saving Quetico-Superior, 56-7.

<sup>4</sup>Searle, Saving Quetico-Superior, 60-2; for Oberholtzer, see also obituary in Quetico [Foundation] Newsletter (Spring/Summer, 1977) 23: 7, copy in Minnesota Historical Society, Sigurd F. Olson Papers (hereafter SFO), 29.C.12.5B, box 15, QF-1977 file; E.C. Oberholtzer to Arthur Hawkes, 13 June 1927, Minnesota Historical Society, Quetico-Superior Council Records (hereafter QSC), Arthur Hawkes papers, P 34, box 25; Hawkes to Oberholtzer, 28 June 1927; Oberholtzer to Hawkes, 4 July 1927. On Hawkes's colourful career, see obituary in the Winnipeg Free Press, 19 October 1933, n.p., copy in QSC, Arthur Hawkes papers, P 34, box 25. For the origins of Quetico Provincial Park, see Richard S. Lambert with Paul Pross, Renewing Nature's Wealth: A Centennial History of the Public Management of Lands, Forests and Wildlife in Ontario, 1763-1967 (Ontario Department of Lands and Forests, 1967), 284-5 and George Warecki, "The Quetico-Superior Council and the Battle For Wilderness in Quetico Provincial Park, 1909-1960," (M.A. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1983), 11-23.

<sup>5</sup>Oberholtzer to Harkin, 21 November 1927, QSC, J.B. Harkin papers, P 34, box 25; Oberholtzer to Harkin, 30 March 1928; Searle, Saving Quetico-Superior, 63-4. For Harkin, see Janet Foster, Working For Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada (Toronto, 1978), 77-82, and Leslie Bella, Parks For Profit (Montreal, 1987), *passim*.

<sup>6</sup>Oberholtzer to William Finlayson, 2 November 1927, Land Records, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Records Branch, Whitney Block, Queen's Park, Toronto (hereafter LR), file 116062 vol. I. All quotes from this source.

<sup>7</sup>Oberholtzer to Finlayson, 16 February 1928, LR 116062 vol. I; Searle, Saving Quetico-Superior, 67-70; Oberholtzer to Finlayson, 2 Nov. 1927, copy in LR 116062 vol. I.

<sup>8</sup>Searle, Saving Quetico-Superior, 67. A copy of Jardine's response to Oberholtzer (26 Nov. 1927) is in Quetico Foundation Office Records, Toronto, used with permission (hereafter QF), vertical file, QSC 1927 folder. For Finlayson's legislative record, see Peter Oliver, G. Howard Ferguson: Ontario Tory Ontario Historical Studies Series (Toronto and Buffalo, 1977), 342-5.

<sup>9</sup>Finlayson to Oberholtzer, 9 Nov. 1927, original in QF, vertical file, QSC 1927 folder; Finlayson to W.G. Dorr, 14 November 1927, LR 116062 vol. I. J.A. Mathieu, MPP, also urged co-operation with the Americans while rejecting the