The Background

The KHSS is a 35,000 hectare portion of the Kawartha Highlands that was identified as one of nine Signature Sites in the Province in Ontario's Living Legacy Land Use Strategy of July 1999. The Kawartha Highlands contains large tracts of Crown land that are relatively undeveloped, and uninhabited shield areas. **It also has corridors of very significant private property development** around thirteen out of the fifteen major lakes and connecting waterways in the area, which contribute very significantly to the local economy. Bottle Lake has only four private properties, and Sucker has none. Most private land around the lakes was sold by the Crown prior to 1958.

The ratio of private land to Crown land in the Highlands has been more or less frozen since 1959. The Minister of the Department of Lands and Forests at the time, J.W. Spooner, arrested the privatization of the area in January 1959 and set aside large tracts of land in Anstruther, Burleigh, Cavendish and Harvey Townships to be used, it was initially thought, for public camp grounds to be developed as warranted by demand. However studies indicated that most of the area was unsuitable for campground development, mainly because of insufficient soil depths and poor drainage. These areas set aside by Spooner have been referred to in the past as "Recreation Reserves".

The area that was determined in 1958 to be suitable for "park" development consisted of 1,850 hectares around Bottle and Sucker Lakes in Cavendish and Anstruther Townships, and this area became known as the **Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park (KHPP)**. One draft plan for the KHPP that was prepared about 1967 provided for over 750 sites in the KHPP area, as well as **parking, docking and launch ramps** on the Crown land at the **east end of Beaver Lake.** According to consultant Jack van der Meer a road was started into the area between Bottle and Sucker Lakes in the Winter of 1968 using taxpayers' funds from Winter Works funding. This road was abandoned the following year when it was realized that the forecast demand for campsites was too high, and Winter Works taxpayers' funds were diverted into the development of snowmobile trails. The road has since grown over to a considerable degree. The KHPP was identified as a Park Reserve in 1979.

In 1983 the Bancroft and Minden District Land Use Guidelines were put into effect and they indicated (planned ?) that by the year 2000 a total of **214 car camping sites** would be required within the KHPP, **189** in Cavendish Township and **25** in Anstruther Township. There were a total of **17** campsites in the KHPP at that time.

In 1989 the area known as the Kawartha Highlands Provincial Park (KHPP) was regulated. At that time the MNR indicated that they would be involving the public, including local property owners, in the development of a management plan. At that time there were still only **17** campsites identified within the KHPP.

Today, there are still **17** campsites in the KHPP, there is no proper road access or controlled parking and no viable plan has been presented to local property owners. The

KHPP is currently identified, and **advertised by Parks Ontario, as a** provincial park. The manner in which this park has been operated by the MNR, and the resulting abuse of the KHPP, primarily by overnight campers, has been one of the most serious **specific** issues raised concerning long term protection of the area. These abuses are particularly obvious to nearby property owners who love the area dearly and have been performing tasks as volunteers, that might be considered to be MNR responsibilities, to maintain the area.