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LOCAL NEWS

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Paws off

CPAWS calls for forestry, mining moratorium in proposed wilderness area

DARRELL COLE
Amherst Daily News

AMHERST – The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society is calling on government to place a moratorium on forestry and mining in and around the Chignecto Game Sanctuary while the area is studied as a potential wilderness area.

“We need assurances from the minister that there will be no exploration activities or forestry operations taking place on these Crown lands while these negotiations and consultations are happening,” CPAWS national manager of wilderness conservation and climate change Chris Miller said Friday. “Otherwise you run the risk of losing the values that have been identified as being significant before they can be protected.”

Miller’s comments come as the province released the evaluation process that will be used to consider creating a wilderness area in and around the game sanctuary. The map of the 35,000-hectare study area is a near-carbon copy of the proposal made last month by Cumberland Wilderness, with the main difference being the study area is only made up of Crown land.

“We certainly welcome the public consultation. It’s something that’s absolutely required for the wilderness area designation to move forward. We hope that as many different stakeholders as possible will contribute positively to those consultations,” Miller said.

While pleased with the consultations, Miller said his organization remains concerned the areas in question could still potentially be degraded by industrial activities.

“For this process to have any integrity, we need assurances that the Crown lands won’t be damaged while these consultations take place,” Miller said. “The lands in that area represent a fairly significant eco-system. It’s one of the largest intact forests remaining in Nova Scotia with a number of important waterways. It’s home to a number of at-risk species and Acadian growth forests.”

The consultation process will come to an end in June, at which time it will determine what areas, if



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any, it wants to give wilderness protection to. There are also no guarantees the study area will get added protection or, in the case of land outside the sanctuary, any protection at all. The initial consultations will be with interested stakeholders including municipal, community, industry, recreation, business and environmental groups and organizations. Once the proposed boundary has been developed, the department will launch a broad public and stakeholder consultation process that will include opportunities for meetings with staff and written submissions. There will also be public open houses and information displays and the opportunity to comment on a socio-economic study. The study area extends outside the sanctuary to the coastal area along the Sand River and extends north and east near Maccan. The Boars Back Ridge Road to River Hebert, the paved coastal highway between Shulie and Sand River, and the Goodwin Road that connects these roads are being excluded from the study area.

dcole@amherstdaily.com



14/12/09

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Concerned from Amherst writes: I heard of Irving selling their coastal property around Shulie to an undisclosed buyer. Hope there is no secret deal being cooked up with Irving for a stake in the game reserve.

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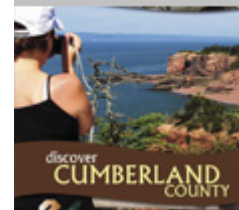
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