

Compromise reached, GLOBE OCT 31 '86 deer hunt to go ahead

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Deer hunting will go ahead Monday in the Peterborough Crown Game Preserve, but protesting cottagers have won a partial victory with a recommendation that no subsequent hunting be allowed until a long-term management plan is developed.

(Ontario Environment Minister James Bradley announced yesterday that he was accepting the recommendation from the province's Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee that no environmental assessment be required for the proposed two-week 1986 controlled hunt.)

Mr. Bradley said the Minister of Natural Resources will develop a long-range management plan "which will be subject to notification, public consultation and review before it is finalized."

Ambrose Moran, president of the Jack Lake Cottagers Association, said it was "a major breakthrough" for the public to have a say in future wildlife management activities.

"We feel very confident that we can sufficiently influence that process so that there will be no further hunts in the game preserve after this year," Mr. Moran said.

However, Donald Huff of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists said that regardless of future public input, it is clear that the Ministry of Natural Resources broke its own guidelines.

The ministry's Bancroft District Land Use Guidelines say hunting and trapping is permitted on all Crown lands "except the Peterborough Game Preserve" and provincial parks.

"They knew what they were doing, they just ignored their own guidelines. The question is, who controls the Ministry of Natural Resources," he said.

Ministry officials had argued before the Environmental Assessment Advisory Committee that the hunt was needed to cull an overpopulated deer herd to prevent mass starvation during the winter.

But cottagers and some naturalist groups had disputed the ministry's information and statistics.

The committee report contained a veiled suggestion that the Ministry of Natural Resources had provided less than adequate opportunity for public consultation.

The committee noted that it was not until an Oct. 17 public meeting that opponents had the first opportunity to present their views and question the ministry's position.

The committee recommended public consultation be initiated at least 60 days before any future hunt and 30 days public notice be given before any wildlife management plan is approved.

The committee said it was not clear whether the ministry had complied with "either the letter or the spirit" of two clauses it used in seeking to exempt the hunt from provisions of the Environmental Assessment Act.

Following the recommendation of the Environmental Advisory Committee - the hunt in 1986 was allowed to proceed BUT no further hunts were allowed as MNR had be caught justifying a hunt in the preserve based on fabricated rational and sensationalizing the mass deer starvation to justify their client group the Anglers and Hunters Association being able to hunt tame deer