



Immediate Release

NCC Moves to Limit Meech Lake Motorboats

Chelsea, July 11, 2009 – The GPPC is commending the NCC’s latest move to protect Meech Lake and prioritize the public interest in managing Gatineau Park.

“By cancelling its agreement with the Meech Lake Association on the launch of motorboats, the NCC is beginning to show it’s serious about protecting Gatineau Park’s ecosystems, today said GPPC co-chair Andrew McDermott. “Residents have been abusing Meech Lake with illegal constructions and pollution for far too long, and this is a very clear signal that the NCC intends to start cleaning up the mess,” he added.

In a recent statement, the NCC confirmed that members of the Meech Lake Association will have to launch motorboats from their own property or that of other residents beginning in the spring of 2010. Reasons given for this move: motorboats are incompatible with Gatineau Park’s conservation mission since they undermine lake health and diminish the quality of the park experience for visitors.

“Although Meech Lake residents have for years claimed they are ‘good stewards of the land,’ their actions say otherwise,” Mr. McDermott said. “They have damaged fish habitat and muddied Meech Lake through heavy excavation; helped spread blue-green algae; left explosives lying about the shoreline; built houses directly on the lakebed, not to mention illegal docks,” he added.

Besides treating Meech Lake like a garbage can, residents have for years been trying to turn it into their own private playground. They did this most recently during the renewal of the Gatineau Park Master Plan, by urging the NCC to close Meech Lake’s Blanchet Beach and boat launch. As well, they had convinced the Municipality of Chelsea in the late 1980’s to put up a gate at Meech Lake to prevent public access.

“This decision strongly suggests the NCC is no longer willing to be pushed around by the Meech Lake Association, and that it’s taking Gatineau Park’s public vocation very seriously,” Mr. McDermott said.

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