

Carling Stewards – Custodial Co-Management Initiative

In 2008, Carling Township will once again lead a multi-partner initiative to address social and environmental issues related to Crown land camping activities on Franklin Island and other Crown islands fronting the township.

This program has grown annually since its inception in 2006, and represents a true stewardship initiative in which numerous partners provide volunteer labour, skills, money and equipment in a collaborative manner to care for our lands and waters.

Summer students, hired by Carling Township and volunteers engage in three fundamental program activities:

1. Mitigation and custodial activities (erecting 'Best Camping Practices' signs; installation of bush latrines at high use sites and behind-the-scenes campsite clean-up)
2. Monitoring activities (determine degree of usage at specific sites and identify problem campers and issues)
3. Education activities (distribute brochures and personal contacts).

Some interesting results from the 2007 program:

- 30 campsites were monitored
- 133 visitations of unoccupied sites found 90% to be satisfactory and 10% requiring remedial clean-up of varying degree
- Campers on Franklin Island were equally divided between locals (Parry Sound area) and visitors from elsewhere in the Province.
- There was a high correlation between problem campers and those of local origin.
- A typical Franklin Island camping party: stays for 3.6 nights, has 3.5 tents, has 2.1 boats and averages 6.1 people.

Supporting partners in this initiative include: Carling Township (lead partner), West Carling Association, North Sound Association, White Squall Paddling Center, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Georgian Bay Land Trust, Georgian Bay Biosphere Reserve, Canadian Boating Alliance and the Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council.

Much to their credit, the Great Lakes Sea Kayaking Association and White Squall Paddling Centre also ran a parallel but independent program to look after Crown land campsites at more remote locations, including the McCoys, Mink Islands, Snakes and those in the vicinity of Sandy Island.

The Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Council in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources, Township of the Archipelago and local cottage associations, also conducts similar projects elsewhere including the Severn River, Moon River, Island Lake and Wahwashkesh Lake.

The above partners look forward to another great camping season in 2008 and remind Crown land campers to respect the environment and one another.

For further information on any of the above initiatives, please contact Eric McIntyre, Eastern Georgian Bay Stewardship Coordinator, at 773-4218 or Eric.McIntyre@Ontario.ca.