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Dalton McGuinty, Premier
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier McGuinty,

I'm writing regarding the Wolf Lake Forest Reserve. As the lead author of *Ontario's Old-Growth Forests*, I have both a personal and professional interest in this forest. Our guidebook lists 59 old-growth sites across the province, and I visited these and many more as part of the research for the book. In my experience the forest around Wolf Lake really is unique. This impression is supported by science - as early as 1991 this forest was identified in a report commissioned by the Ministry of Natural Resources as being the largest contiguous area of old-growth red pine in Site Region 4E (a huge area encompassing much of the area in which red pine predominates in Ontario). Several things make the Wolf Lake area unique, including very high density of pine in the canopy, uneven-aged red pine forest, and dense pine regeneration. It's also significant that the older trees in this forest are around 300 years old.

You are no doubt aware that the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario discussed this issue in the 2008-09 annual report, stating "The ECO believes that the government's failure to protect the Wolf Lake area, as it committed to in the 1990s, illustrates a serious policy flaw. The government should have the ability to rectify a mistake that has clear ecological consequences. MNR and MNDM should be capable of protecting an area that contains one of the largest, if not the largest, known contiguous red pine old growth forest in North America."

My impression is that the conservation community was caught off guard on this issue, simply because removing protection from this area doesn't make sense scientifically, morally, economically, or (I would argue) politically. This area represents one of the higher

value old growth forests in the province, has a significant canoe tripping / tourism value, and may not even have any significant mineral value. Irrespective of the politics of the issue, working towards some form of permanent protection for this area is the right thing to do. I believe that you and your government work on the basis of both sound reason and strong values. In this case, it is clear that we need to maintain the forest reserve status and fast-track provincial park status for the Wolf Lake Forest. Indeed, I see this not so much as a problem, as an opportunity - to make a choice that will benefit current and future generations of Ontarians.

I'm sending you a copy of our book, I think you'll find it interesting. Wolf Lake can be found on Pages 136-137.

Sincerely

Michael Henry