



**Immediate Release**

### **Conservation Plan an Empty Shell**

**Chelsea, March 17, 2010** – “The Gatineau Park Conservation Plan is an empty shell and cynical exercise designed to keep the public out of the park, while allowing residents to continue despoiling its environment,” today said GPPC co-chair Andrew McDermott.

The Conservation Plan unveiled March 17 flows out of the 2005 Gatineau Park Master Plan, which mandated conservation as the priority for park management. However, since adoption of the Master Plan in May 2005, the NCC has allowed significant residential development in the park – in direct violation of every Master Plan ever written. As well, 119 new houses have been built in the park since 1992.

“Although the plan pays lip service to the damage done by private properties, it fails to address the issue head on or to provide a strategy for tackling it,” said Mr. McDermott.

The Conservation Plan lists three main factors leading to the park's ecological degradation: invasive species; recreation and visitorship; private properties (First Revised Draft, March 2008, page A-2-7). It also confirms that private properties are deteriorating the park's largest lakes through water pollution, habitat fragmentation and the erosion of riparian habitats (page 87).

“Yet, in its ‘Priority Ranking of Top Conservation Actions’ (p. 126), the plan fails to address residential proliferation, saying instead it will limit ‘water-borne human activities and swimming’ to protect natural vegetation on the shores of La Pêche, Philippe and Meech Lakes,” Mr. McDermott said. “So, according to NCC ‘logic,’ swimming and canoeing are greater ecological threats than shoreline construction with use of dynamite and serious sedimentation of fish habitat,” he added.

The Conservation Plan also has also drawn strong criticism for the impact it will have on rock climbing and park access in general.

“As further evidence of the NCC's timid commitment to conservation, I might underline that the NCC removed any mention of private property development in the park in its November 2009 Conservation Plan submission to the board,” said Mr. McDermott ([http://ncc-ccn.ca/data/2/rec\\_docs/23038\\_2009-Park-conservation\\_e.pdf](http://ncc-ccn.ca/data/2/rec_docs/23038_2009-Park-conservation_e.pdf)).

“Moreover, NCC CEO Marie Lemay has shown embarrassing weakness on the issue of residential proliferation. Testifying before the Commons Transport Committee last October, she said there was nothing she could do to stop housing subdivisions in Gatineau Park, since this was a municipal jurisdiction,” Mr McDermott said.

“Without comprehensive legislation, and in the absence of strong leadership, the park Conservation Plan will remain a wholesale swindle perpetrated at taxpayer expense, confirming the NCC's ‘analysis paralysis,’” Mr. McDermott said.