

# Take action

Funding for our parks must be an issue in the October 10 provincial election. There are lots of ways you can help:

- Sign our online petition at [www.saveontarioparks.ca](http://www.saveontarioparks.ca)
- Download this leaflet and share it with friends, neighbours, and members of groups who care about our parks
- Talk about park funding with other park users
- When politicians come to your door, ask them where they stand on parks funding
- Attend all-candidates meetings during the provincial election campaign and ask about parks funding.

**Our parks need our help.  
For more information,  
visit [www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org) or  
[saveontarioparks.ca](http://saveontarioparks.ca).**



Ontario Public Service Employees Union  
100 Lesmill Road  
Toronto, Ontario M3B 3P8  
[www.opseu.org](http://www.opseu.org)

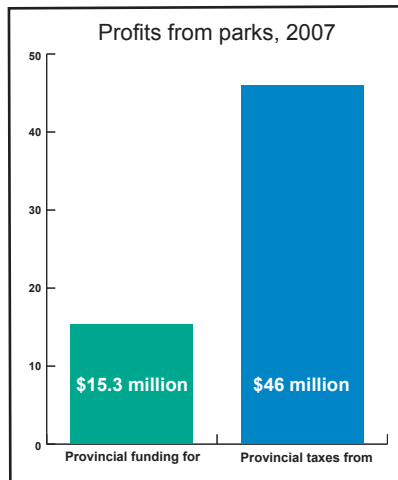


**Let's give  
new life  
to our  
Ontario  
Parks**



# The funding crisis in our provincial parks

Ontario has 329 provincial parks, 292 conservation reserves, and 10 wilderness areas. These areas cover nine per cent of the province. But did you know that the province pays just \$15.3 million a year to fund park operations?



In 2007, almost all Ontario park revenues – 78 per cent – come from park fees. This is by far the highest rate of any province in Canada.

Ontario's Liberal government is working towards the day when the parks system will operate without public funding at all.

"We're basically at a point where we're very close to being break-even now on the parks revenues coming in to operate those parks," Minister of Natural Resources David Ramsay told the Legislature last year. "We're trying to manage within that budget."

This is a huge mistake. Ontario can do better.

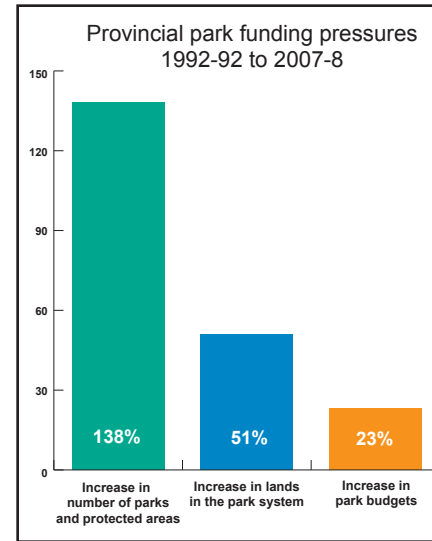
The Environmental Commissioner of Ontario says our parks generate \$390 million in economic activity and 14,000 person-years of employment every year. In 2001, an MNR report estimated that this activity generated at least \$41 million in taxes for the province. Adjusted for inflation, that would be \$46 million today.

In other words, the province gets three dollars out of our parks for every dollar it puts in.

## Let's give new life to our parks!

In 2006, the McGuinty government passed a new Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act. The new law received praise from many conservation groups, but without funding to protect our wild places, it's a toothless guard-dog.

***"The province gets three dollars out of our parks for every dollar it puts in."***



That's why OPSEU is calling on the Ontario government to triple its contribution to park operating budgets. This will boost park funding from \$15.3 million to \$46 million, or roughly what the government collects in park-related taxes. It will boost overall park budgets by 45 per cent.

The best use of this money? More staff. More park wardens to patrol wilderness areas and keep campgrounds and day-use areas safe. More natural heritage educators to teach our children about our planet and our place on it. More maintenance staff to keep our parks clean, safe and enjoyable. More office and store staff to help with reservations, directions, and supplies.

**We can make our parks better. With a provincial election just weeks away, now is the time.**

