



# FRONT *lines*

Information for OPSEU members in the Ontario Public Service • June 2, 2006

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## MNR swings axe at parks

Ontario's provincial parks are being hit with staff cuts that will wipe out an estimated 19 per cent of the summer workforce.

Both seasonal and student jobs are being hit hard as the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) chops weeks off work contracts, reduces weekly hours for some jobs, fails to fill vacancies, and abolishes some positions altogether.

"We are telling everyone we talk to that these cuts are unnecessary, unwise, and unacceptable," OPSEU president Leah Casselman told a Queen's Park news conference this morning. "We are asking people to contact the Minister, David Ramsay ([dramsay.mpp@liberal.ola.org](mailto:dramsay.mpp@liberal.ola.org)), and tell him to reverse these cuts immediately."

The MNR has not provided the union with a park-by-park breakdown of the cuts, but reports from OPSEU locals paint a scary picture.

Park interpretive staff are being cut back. Park wardens are being cut back. Park stores are closing or cutting their hours of operation. Some parks will shut their gates early at the end of the summer.

"These cuts compromise nature education, park safety, recreational opportunities, and convenience for all park users," Casselman said.

Park maintenance will also be affected, she added.

"Park users who expect clean bathrooms, frequent garbage pick-up, well-maintained trails, and easy access to information may be disappointed this summer."

Casselman was joined at the news conference by Elaine Bagnall, OPSEU chair of the Ministry Enforcement and Renewal Committee (MERC) for MNR. In a letter Thursday, Casselman and Bagnall sent details of the cuts to some 80 park-related interest

groups. Contacting all MPPs is next.

"We oppose these cuts, and this summer we intend to enlist the aid of all Ontarians in opposing these cuts."

For more information, contact any member of the MNR MERC team:

Elaine Bagnall, Chair [ebagnall\\_opseu@yahoo.ca](mailto:ebagnall_opseu@yahoo.ca)

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## Put an end to highway privatization! Sign our petition

As outlined in *FRONTlines* (April 6), the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario has plans in the works to contract out highway maintenance in the form of giant contracts up to 20 years long. These contracts, called Area Term Contracts (ATCs), would involve not only maintenance, but also road reconstruction within the contract area.

ATCs could wipe out the job of every OPSEU member in the Highway Management Division. To join the campaign to stop them, please sign the online petition at [http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/ATC\\_Petition/](http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/ATC_Petition/).

To find out more, contact the MTO MERC:

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