

**MEMORANDUM**

**OPSEU**



**SEFPO**

Syndicat des Employé-e-s  
de la Fonction Publique  
de l'Ontario

**TO:** All Presidents with members in the Ministry of Natural Resources  
All Stewards in the Ministry of Natural Resources

**FROM:** Terry Baxter, OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

**DATE:** February 7, 2005

**SUBJECT:** **Ministry of Natural Resources  
ERC Minutes – October 17, 2003**

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Attached, for your information, are the minutes of the above captioned meeting.

Please post or otherwise make them available to the members in your workplaces.

Also attached is a MERC referral form which should be used when referring unresolved local issues to the ministry level. The referral should be sent care of the our Job Security Unit with all the supporting documentation, (e.g. minutes, correspondence, etc.), with any referrals.

**PLEASE NOTE: THESE MINISTRY MINUTES WERE PREPARED BY THE EMPLOYER.**

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cc: MERC Chairs  
Ministry ERC

**Ministry Employee Relations Committee  
OPSEU  
October 17, 2003  
Toronto**

Present for OPSEU:

Elaine Bagnall (Co-Chair)  
Pat Schillemore  
Peter Wall  
John Berry  
Ed Evens

Present for the Ministry:

Rob Kennedy (Co-Chair)  
Tracy Demal (Minutes)  
Steve Boyd  
Lois Deacon  
Tom Jones (Guest)  
Ed Vervoort (Guest)  
Barry O'Brien (Guest - By Phone)

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## **1. Health and Safety**

**Boot Allowance:** The union expressed the view that the current reimbursement for safety boots was not adequate to cover the actual current cost and requested that the ministry consider increasing the amount reimbursed to \$300.00 per year. The ministry responded that given the current fiscal environment, it was unlikely there would be much support for the union's proposal at this time. It did indicate, however, it would look into the situation and report back at the next meeting.

*Action: The ministry will review current practice and report back to the union at the next MERC meeting.*

**Aviation:** The ministry provided an update on the helicopter crash and floatplane incident and responded to a number of questions brought forward by the union related to aviation operations in the ministry. The ministry informed the union that the ministry's fleet has been enhanced over and above Transport Canada standards. The union suggested again that contract helicopters should be subject to the same standards the ministry uses. The ministry explained why it was not in a position to do that. The union asked if there were any plans to alter the practice of flying in temperatures of -40 degrees. The ministry indicated not

at this time and stated that cold, dry weather is an ideal flying condition. The ministry advised that the Transportation Safety Board has not completed their draft report related to the January helicopter accident. It is expected that the ministry will not receive the report until this winter.

*Action: The ministry will provide the union with a copy of the Airworthiness Directive.*

Sioux Narrows PP: The union brought forward a concern related to the Sioux Narrows Provincial Park in the NWR. This union indicated that this park has been contracted out to a Sioux Narrows community group and they have been advised that the local Joint Health and Safety Committee is continuing to conduct health and safety inspections at the park.

*Action: The ministry will look into this situation and report back at the next MERC meeting.*

Ergonomics Handbook: The union provided the ministry with a copy of the OPSEU *Office Ergonomics Handbook*. The union requested that employees be granted approval to access it. It was suggested also that it could be downloaded from the OPSEU website to a Public Folder and jointly communicated.

*Action: The ministry will review the document and plan to discuss it further at the next meeting.*

Health & Safety Action Plan: The ministry advised that the Health and Safety Action Plan has been posted in the Health and Safety Public Folder and has been sent out to managers and the Joint Health and Safety Committee Co chairs.

Other Policies: The ministry advised that both the Bear Policy and New Equipment Policy have been completed and sent out. Work is underway in updating various other policies and standards.

Owen Sound Tug Boat: The union expressed concern that staffing levels and a reliance on overtime impact the health and safety of our members.

*Action: The ministry will review.*

## **2. Meal Allowance Rates**

In response to the union's proposal that there be an increase to both the Meal Allowance and the Bush Lunch Allowance the ministry advised that the meal allowance rates are set out in a Management Board Directive and the ministry has no control on the content of this directive. Concerns with respect to those

rates should be directed to CERC. The Finance and Business Services Branch is currently in the process of reviewing its policies including the policy dealing with the bush lunch allowance.

### **3. Code of Professionalism**

Ed Vervoort provided an update on the Code of Professionalism which is intended to be implemented by March or April 2004. It is anticipated between 1500 and 2000 MNR staff will be affected, including those in enforcement, inspection, audit and compliance. No decision has been made yet on which specific positions will be subject to the Code. Training will be conducted prior to the role out. The ministry is working with the I.I. & E. Secretariat. The union asked if private companies/agents of MNR will be required to adhere to the Code. The union requested and the ministry agreed that members from MERC should attend the training session.

*Action: The ministry to investigate and report back.*

### **4. Working Out of Province**

The union expressed concern over the number of hours worked by employees working out of the province and provided a summary of out of province work for the fire crews in Sioux Lookout. The union feels that employees should receive additional compensation as a result of working out of province. The union stated that employees in fire often incur additional expenses in summer when working out of province and feels that this is not the same as employees in other ministries going out of province for a conference or one time only emergency. The union stated that fires happen every summer. The ministry pointed out that there is no statutory authority to commit funds to this and advised that this issue is a compensation issue that affects employees across the OPS and, as such, is an issue that would better raised at the CERC or in collective bargaining.

### **5. Joint Systems Sub Committee (JSSC)**

The union proposed that the ministry advocate for a process for tie breaking at the Joint Systems Sub Committee. The ministry provided an overview of the history of classification dispute resolution and the creation and evolution of the JSSC. While impasses still occur, in the last year or two JSSC, in fact, has become quite effective in resolving many classification disputes. It is now operating much more closely to what the parties intended.

### **6. Ontario with Disabilities Act (ODA)**

The ministry provided the union with a copy of *the Ministry of Natural Resources 2003-2004 Accessibility Plan*.

*Action: The ministry will invite a member of the ODA Planning Committee to attend at the next MERC meeting to provide an update.*

## **7. Workforce Analysis**

Tom Jones on behalf of the ministry provided an overview of the MNR Workforce Analysis which was recently completed. The study provided a wealth of information on ministry demographics and mobility patterns which will provide a foundation for a number of workforce planning initiatives.

## **8. Conservation Officer Meal Allowance Grievance**

Pursuant to the understanding from the GSB hearing, the union and ministry agreed to schedule a meeting outside of MERC to discuss the Conservation Officer Meal Allowance grievance in further detail.

## **9. Management Doing Bargaining Work**

The union expressed a concern arising out of Midhurst District about management staff doing dam operations work on weekends in April 2003. The union contended that the reason for managers doing the work was that no money was available to pay overtime to the OPSEU members who normally would have done the work. The ministry responded that if this did occur it was within management's right to do so but, nonetheless, agreed to look into the matter. The union reminded the ministry that this work was deemed an essential service during the last round of negotiations for the collective agreement.

*Action: The ministry will follow up and report back at the next MERC meeting.*

## **10. Ontario Works**

The union advised that they have not been contacted regarding any workfare projects for some time and requested that we provide an update at the next MERC meeting.

## **11. Hiring Freeze**

The ministry provided an update on the staffing freeze and provided an overview of the current process for gaining approval for exemptions to staff both classified and unclassified positions.

## 12. Water Treatment License

The ministry advised that the salary note in Appendix UN 7 was negotiated specifically for OCWA employees and is paid for by OCWA.

## 13. Memorial

The union suggested there should be something at the Corporate Ministry level to honour those who have lost their lives at work.

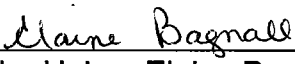
## 14. Business Critical Positions

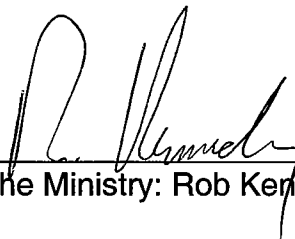
The union asked for a list of positions deemed to be business critical during the August blackout. The ministry stated the request should go to CERC.

## 15. Unclassified listing

The Union requested a listing of unclassified employees within the ministry. The ministry responded that such a listing should be available from the dues check off list which already is provided to the union.

## Signatures:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
For the Union: Elaine Bagnall  
14/1/05  
Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
For the Ministry: Rob Kennedy  
14/1/05  
Date

**MEMORANDUM**

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Syndicat des Employé-e-s  
de la Fonction Publique  
de l'Ontario

**TO:** All Presidents with members in the Ministry of Natural Resources  
All Stewards in the Ministry of Natural Resources

**FROM:** Terry Baxter, OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

**DATE:** February 7, 2005

**SUBJECT:** **Ministry of Natural Resources  
ERC Minutes – June 26, 2003**

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Attached, for your information, are the minutes of the above captioned meeting.

Please post or otherwise make them available to the members in your workplaces.

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Leah Casselman  
President

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att.

cc: MERC Chairs  
Ministry ERC

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Terry Baxter  
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

**Ministry Employee Relations Committee  
OPSEU  
June 26, 2003  
Toronto**

Present for OPSEU:

Elaine Bagnall (Co-Chair)  
Pat Schillemore  
Marg Simmons  
Peter Wall

Present for the Ministry:

Rob Kennedy (Co-Chair)  
Tracy Demal (Minutes)  
Steve Boyd (By Phone)  
Greg Sones (Guest - By Phone)

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**1. Health and Safety**

The ministry advised that the Transportation Safety Board has not completed their draft report related to the January helicopter accident. It is expected that the ministry will not receive the report until late fall of 2003. The union posed a number of questions related to the tracking process that the ministry currently uses, contractor responsibilities and other aviation related questions. The union also questioned whether the ministry was going to have the A-Stars fly in the cold weather temperatures even if we have no report back from the Transportation Safety Board ruling out cold weather as an issue.

*Action: The ministry will invite a representative from aviation to speak to aviation questions brought forward by the union. The union undertook to provide a list of any other questions which it would like addressed in advance of the next MERC meeting.*

The ministry responded to a number of questions raised by the union on the Bear Policy. The union also provided the ministry with written comments on the Bear Policy.

The ministry provided the union with the Field Services Division, SCR, Template District Safety Plan for their review.

The ministry provided the union with the Supervisor's Accident Investigation Summary for the aviation accident that occurred on June 5, 2003. The ministry reported that no serious injury resulted from the accident.

## **2. Enforcement Recruitment Strategy**

The Director, Enforcement Branch provided MERC with an overview on the enforcement recruitment strategy which is an initiative to enhance recruitment of Conservation Officers and Deputy Conservation Officers within the ministry. This initiative will bring MNR in line with best practices of other ministries/jurisdictions. The ministry indicated that likely components of an enforcement recruitment strategy would include a staffing process, interviews including selection criteria/tools, background checks, aptitude and psychological testing and suitability testing and training.

*Action: The ministry will provide an update on the Enforcement Recruitment Strategy and Code of Professionalism at the next meeting.*

## **3. CO Radios**

The ministry advised the union that the ministry has complied with the Ministry of Labour Order and that plans related to the CO radio issue are expected to be signed off in the near future.

## **4. Lateral Transfer Policy**

The ministry and the union agreed that, notwithstanding there was an outstanding policy grievance on point which would normally preclude dealing with the issue at MERC, in this case there was some value in discussing the issues in dispute at MERC on a without prejudice basis. A fulsome discussion ensued which provided the parties with a better understanding of their respective positions. Options were discussed for further discussion on the matter. The union suggested a discussion with the assistance of an objective third party. The ministry suggested a further discussion between the MERC teams setting aside dedicated time at the next MERC meeting. It was agreed while the matter was in discussion a stage two meeting on the policy grievance would be postponed.

*Action: The union will consider the options and advise the ministry of its preference for moving forward.*

The union took the opportunity to raise some concerns with respect to one particular lateral transfer request in Southcentral Region.

*Action: The ministry agreed to investigate the matter and report back at the next meeting.*

**Signatures:**

For the Union: Elaine Bagnall 14/1/05  
Elaine Bagnall Date

For the Ministry: Rob Kennedy 14/1/05  
Rob Kennedy Date

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**TO:** All Presidents with members in the Ministry of Natural Resources  
All Stewards in the Ministry of Natural Resources

**FROM:** Terry Baxter, OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

**DATE:** February 7, 2005

**SUBJECT:** **Ministry of Natural Resources  
ERC Minutes – January 13, 2004 and June 16, 2004**

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President

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att.

cc: MERC Chairs  
Ministry ERC

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Terry Baxter  
OPS Supervisor/Negotiator

**Ministry Employee Relations Committee  
OPSEU  
January 13, 2004  
Toronto**

Present for OPSEU:

Elaine Bagnall (Co-Chair)  
Pat Schillemore  
Peter Wall  
John Berry  
Ed Evans

Present for the Ministry:

Rob Kennedy (Co-Chair)  
Tracy Demal (Minutes)  
Steve Boyd  
Lois Deacon  
Kevin Smith  
John Kerr (Guest by Phone)  
Andy Rothfischer/Pamela Burns (Guests)  
Don Hallman (Guest - By Phone)  
Barry O'Brien (Guest - By Phone)

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## **1. Health and Safety**

**Aggregates Training:** The ministry provided the union with an update on aggregates training. Aurora District has been tasked with working with an enforcement trainer to develop the course content. It is expected that the course content will include legislation, officer safety, courtroom techniques and investigations. Delivery of the training is expected to commence during the next fiscal year.

The union has requested that Aurora District work with the Health and Safety Committee in Kemptville (David Willis) when determining course content.

*Action: The ministry will pass the union's request on to the District Manager, Aurora District for his consideration.*

**Nuisance Bears:** The union raised a number of questions around the recent announcement on nuisance bears. The ministry advised that a small group has been put in place to address the issue of nuisance bears as a result of the December announcement.

*Action: The ministry will provide an update on this issue at the next MERC meeting.*

**Ministry Threshold for Absenteeism:** The ministry confirmed that the ministry threshold for the Attendance Support Program for 2004 has been set at 8.4 days. The ministry average for short-term sick days taken for 2003 was 5.8 days.

**Parks Audit:** The union requested an update on the Ontario Provincial Parks audits.

