



WESTERN CANADA
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For release October 27, 2009.

Selinger Needs to Keep Road Out of Grass River Park

Today, Manitoba Wildlands and the Wilderness Committee are sending their final appeals of the recent environment license that bisects Grass River Provincial Park with a logging road. The license was issued to Tolko Industries mere months after logging was supposedly banned in Grass River Park. The earlier formal appeals, filed in September, were denied by Conservation Minister Stan Struthers without explanation. The two environmental organizations are appealing to Premier Selinger to review this decision, and decide whether a logging road is a logging development, and whether the woodland caribou in this park deserve protection.

“Any reasonable person would expect a thoughtful citizen appeal to be responded to,” said Eric Reder, Campaign Director for the Wilderness Committee. “Unfortunately, our Environment Act includes a ‘weasel out’ clause, allowing our government to deny an appeal without explanation.”

Among other things, their earlier license appeals asked for an explanation of:

- why this logging road is not considered a logging development
- why the road license was issued when Parks staff, regional Manitoba Conservation staff, and Manitoba Water Stewardship branch staff all advised against the road
- why the road needs to be an all-weather road
- why development is being allowed in woodland caribou habitat, a species protected under the Manitoba Endangered Species Act

These final appeals are addressed to our new premier, Greg Selinger.

“We would like to see our new premier stand up for wilderness, wildlife and protected lands in the province,” said Gaile Whelan Enns of Manitoba Wildlands. “This appeal to reverse a poor decision gives him his first opportunity to do so.”

The Wilderness Committee and Manitoba Wildlands are calling for this road license to be revoked. The groups are also calling for a change to the Manitoba Environment Act to require a written explanation for all decisions on appeals filed under the Environment Act. They expect a response to their appeal from Premier Selinger within two weeks.

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