



News Release Communiqué

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ADDITION OF ECOLOGICALLY-SIGNIFICANT LANDS WILL DOUBLE THE SIZE OF ST. LAWRENCE ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK OF CANADA

BROCKVILLE, ONTARIO, November 22, 2005 – Canada’s smallest national park is about to double in size, opening new opportunities for Canadians to experience the park and for Parks Canada to enhance its ecological integrity, thanks to a land transfer from Ontario’s St. Lawrence Parks Commission and a land donation from the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC).

The Honourable Stéphane Dion, Minister of the Environment and Minister responsible for Parks Canada, the Honourable Jim Bradley, Ontario Minister of Tourism, and Mr. John Lounds, President of NCC, today confirmed that 10 square kilometres of ecologically significant lands – located on the mainland – will be added to St. Lawrence Islands National Park of Canada.

“Today is a great day for Canada,” said Minister Dion. “It demonstrates what can be achieved when governments, non-government organizations and community interests work together to protect and preserve Canada’s natural heritage. Through this initiative, we are not only adding new lands to our smallest national park, but also acknowledging that the preservation and protection of Canada’s natural legacy is integral to our quality of life and national identity.”

“This sensitive land will be preserved for future generations of Canadians to enjoy,” said Minister Bradley. “The protection of the nature of the region is key to the prosperity of the tourism industry and honouring our values as Ontarians.”

“By doubling the size of St. Lawrence Islands National Park, we will create new opportunities for Canadians to experience and appreciate this unique part of Canada,” said the Honourable Mauril Bélanger, Minister of Internal Trade and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons. “We will also be able to take effective action to enhance its ecological health and preserve its unique ecosystems.”

The addition of lands to St. Lawrence Islands National Park is the result of an initiative launched by the Partners in Conservation Coalition, a non-profit group formed after the designation of the Frontenac Arch -Thousand Islands area – which includes the park – as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2002. The Coalition is made up of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the Thousands Islands Heritage Conservancy, the Biosphere Network and Parks Canada, which have been working together on common goals related to conservation, public awareness, education and eco-tourism.

“Today’s announcement will go a long way to preserving the St. Lawrence Islands National Park for future generations,” said Kingston and the Islands MPP John Gerretsen. “Ontario is home to some of the most scenic and historic parks in Canada and protecting them is vital to the safety of our natural environment.”

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“We are delighted to have been able to play a role in facilitating the expansion of St. Lawrence Islands National Park,” stated Mr. Lounds. “This park contains the second highest diversity of species in all of Canada’s national parks. Every acre protected here is a significant contribution to conservation.”

“The St. Lawrence Parks Commission is pleased to help expand St. Lawrence Islands National Park with the transfer of this environmentally valuable wildlife habitat,” said Mr. George Assaly, Chair of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission.

Located an easy 1.5 hour drive from Ottawa, St. Lawrence Islands National Park includes more than 24 islands and 90 islets scattered through the St. Lawrence River corridor between Brockville and Kingston, Ontario, within the unique Thousand Islands ecosystem. The lands being added to the park include over 10 square kilometres of mainland property at three locations: Landons Bay, LaRue Mills Creek and Jones Creek. High levels of biodiversity, rare species habitat and exceptional landforms representative of the region are found within these areas. The addition of these lands to the park will contribute greatly both to its conservation role, and to sustainable tourism through the natural heritage experiences that it can offer to future visitors.

The addition of lands to St. Lawrence Islands National Park is an example of the Government’s new Project Green, an initiative to create a healthier environment and a more vigorous economy by uniting all Canadians to build a more sustainable future.

Established in 1904 as the first national park located east of the Rockies, St. Lawrence Islands National Park is one of the 41 national parks and national park reserves of Canada that protect and present significant examples of our nation’s natural and cultural heritage.

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