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## PRESS RELEASE

### Private Members Bill C-366 – Protection for Gatineau Park

*For immediate release*

Ottawa, April 22, 2009 – The Ottawa Valley Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS-OV) applauds Ottawa-Centre MP Paul Dewar's re-introduction of a Private Member's Bill (Bill C-366) to protect Gatineau Park.

The Ottawa Valley Chapter was founded some 40 years ago amid concerns over rampant development threatening the ecological integrity of Gatineau Park. The park has suffered greatly as a result of management practices of the National Capital Commission (NCC) over the past several years and we feel that this Bill will help ensure the park receives the protection it desperately needs. The park's location – a stone's throw from downtown – not only makes it accessible to hundreds of thousands of visitors but park land is often sacrificed for development. For example, since 1992, some 120 houses and five new roads, including the high speed boulevard des Allumettières – a highway slicing the southern portion of the park in half - have been constructed inside the park. Moreover, park land has been sold for the construction of a Tim Horton's, a Loblaw's and a fire station in the Hull sector of the City of Gatineau. While the NCC has acquired some private property inside the park in recent months, more must be done to protect Gatineau Park and we feel that the Dewar Bill is a step in the right direction.

Gatineau Park is the only federal park in Canada without legislated protection. Unlike national parks, its boundaries are not fixed in law – they can be modified, land may be sold and roads and other development can take place inside the park without the approval of Parliament. CPAWS-OV hopes that this Bill will not only help protect the park, but also help to start a dialogue on the future of Gatineau Park and its fragile ecosystems.

In April of 2008, CPAWS-OV released a report on the state of the park entitled "Gatineau Park: A threatened treasure" (which can be found online at [www.cpaws-ov-vo.org/pdfs/g\\_p/gatineau\\_report.pdf](http://www.cpaws-ov-vo.org/pdfs/g_p/gatineau_report.pdf)). The document highlights the richness of the park's ecosystems and the ever increasing stresses, mainly from development, which threaten the park's ecological integrity. The document concludes with a series of recommendations for both the Federal Government and the National Capital Commission. While our ultimate goal is for Gatineau Park to be protected as a National Park under the National Park Act, we urge the Federal government to take the required steps to immediately recognize the park's boundaries in law as a first step toward national park status.

For further information, please contact John McDonnell at (613) 232-7297 or by email at [jmcdonnell@cpaws.org](mailto:jmcdonnell@cpaws.org) – further information on issues facing Gatineau Park may be found on our website at [www.cpaws-ov-vo.org](http://www.cpaws-ov-vo.org).

Source:

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