



Frequently Asked Questions

on the Hyperabundant Moose Management Plan on North Mountain, Cape Breton Highlands National Park

UINR is working on a project with Parks Canada to reverse forest loss in Cape Breton Highlands National Park by removing a small number of moose from a small area of North Mountain.

Since being reintroduced in 1947, moose numbers have drastically increased in the Park and today, moose populations are greater than what the forests can support, affecting the entire ecosystem.

The Hyperabundant Moose Management Plan for North Mountain will help restore forest health in the area. A harvest will be led by UINR with qualified Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq harvesters. This FAQ answers some questions you may have on the harvest.

Why are you harvesting moose in the Park?

Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, at time when Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq re-established our rights to harvest moose and other species, we noticed a high concentration of moose in areas of the Cape Breton Highlands including Cape Breton Highlands National Park. At that time, we informed Mi'kmaq leadership that there appeared to be too many moose in the Highlands and that such hyperabundance could lead to devastating habitat destruction down the road. That prediction proved to be accurate. Approximately 11% of the national park has been changed from prime moose habitat to what can now be described as grassland which is the direct result of over browsing their food sources. These cautions were heeded and recently a Hyperabundant Moose Management Plan for North Mountain was developed, as required by Parks Canada Management Directive. Following stakeholder and expert consultation, Parks Canada is authorizing the "Bring Back the Boreal Forest—North Mountain" moose removal through a Mi'kmaq-led harvest, slated to begin 9 November 2015. In essence, the Mi'kmaq have been asked by Parks Canada to remove moose from a 20-square kilometre section of North Mountain. It's all part of a study to see how the absence of moose will allow trees and other plants to grow in an area devastated by moose over browsing.

What else is being done?

In addition to the proposed harvest, Parks Canada, with Mi'kmaq involvement, have planted trees on the Skyline Trail, built exclosures (fenced in areas that keep moose out) to study how trees and other plants can grow without heavy moose browsing. The Mi'kmaq have also been involved with prescribed burns for areas within the Park.

How many moose are being removed?

Initially, and in the first harvest, the Mi'kmaq have been asked to remove 90% of the moose from the study area—the 20-square kilometre section of North Mountain. The last survey estimated there are 40 moose within that area of North Mountain, so we expect to harvest 30-40 moose from the area.

Can any Mi'kmaq person harvest in the Park?

No. It's not a case of an open season for moose in the Park. This is an organized harvest and selection committees have determined who gets to participate as harvesters.





How are harvesters chosen?

The harvesters were chosen by a number of criteria. They must be physically fit to hunt in a remote area of North Mountain which has no roads or trails to support them. Harvesters will be selected based on skill and demonstration of leadership. In addition to being role model Mi'kmaq harvesters, they must have completed the Canadian Firearms Safety Course and have a valid Possession and Acquisition License.

Why is it Mi'kmaq only?

It's a Mi'kmaq only harvest in accordance to an agreement signed between the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs and Parks Canada in 2012. The Mi'kmaq have always expressed an interest in the management of moose and moose habitat in Unama'ki and in the event of a hyperabundant situation, the Mi'kmaq have always offered to be a greater part of the solution. In this case, it involves not only harvesting, but other activities including tree planting within the Park, being informed of prescribed burns, and the construction of moose exclosures.

How many harvesters are there?

We will have eight harvesters from Unama'ki with two back-up hunters. We will also have four harvesters from the Mainland communities with two back-up hunters.

What are their credentials?

Our harvesters will be selected based on skill and demonstration of leadership. In addition to being role model Mi'kmaq harvesters, they must have completed the Canadian Firearms Safety Course and have a valid Possession and Acquisition License.

Where are they from?

The harvesters are from the Mi'kmaq communities of Nova Scotia.

What will you do with the moose meat?

Harvesters have the choice of returning the meat to their respective communities or donating it, or any portion of it, to Feed Nova Scotia.

Will you use ATVs?

To minimize environmental impacts, no ATVs will be used.

How long will it take?

It is anticipated that the bulk of the harvest will take place in a two-week period. After that, an assessment of our harvest goals will take place to see if additional harvesting is needed. We anticipate it will take a minimum of two weeks.

Is it an ongoing thing?

This is year two of a four-year study.

How can I learn more?

Visit the UINR website uinr.ca or visit Parks Canada website at pc.gc.ca/BringBacktheBoreal
Or you can contact UINR Moose Management Initiative Coordinator:
Clifford Paul: (902) 379-2163 or clifford@uinr.ca

