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Amy Kellar, 26, of Renfrew was the lone victim of this fiery head-on collision on the infamous Highway 17 involving her small eastbound vehicle and a westbound tractor trailer last Wednesday morning on Highway 17 between Gillan and Goshen Roads, east of Renfrew. The highway was closed for 13 hours while the OPP, with the assistance from Technical Traffic Collision Investigators, investigated the crash.

Expansion of protected area in Algonquin Park a surprise

By Terry Fleurie
Staff Writer

Pembroke -- A recent announcement by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) regarding an expansion of the areas protected from logging and aggregate extraction in Algonquin Park has surprised officials at the County of Renfrew.

The MNR announced July 19 that an additional 96,000 hectares of land in Ontario's largest provincial park is now protected from these activities which Minister David Orazietti said will help ensure a balance between conservation and forest management.

"Our goal is to preserve this important ecosystem for all Ontarians while allowing the sustainable use of our

natural resources to generate socio-economic benefits," he said in a release.

The expanded area includes approximately 70,000 hectares along waterways, while another 14,000 hectares were rezoned to enhance and connect existing wilderness zones. The other 12,000 hectares are being converted to nature reserves zones to protect wildlife habitat.

"Canoe routes, brook trout lakes and historical and cultural heritage will be preserved by the changes," noted MNR spokesperson, Jolanta Kowalski.

The announcement caught officials at the County of Renfrew off-guard, according to Paul Moreau, the director of development and property.

"We were a little bit surprised about the announcement in that we were under the impression . . . our elected in Renfrew County had done a considerable amount of lobbying on behalf of the forest industry to ensure that the harvest volumes remained the same," he noted. "And for the County of Renfrew, it's all about jobs and protecting jobs in our forest sector, especially after they have been hit so hard since 2005 with the downturn in the economy."

Mr. Moreau said the industry was just starting to experience a bit of a rebound and now this news of the expansion of the protected area is released.

"We're always a bit cautious when

it comes to a provincial announcement about the available wood to our industry in Algonquin Park," he said.

He confirmed the increase was almost 100,000 hectares, adding from what he has heard, some of those areas were previously protected to some degree through the park's forest management plan.

"But now it makes it a complete no-go zone," he stated. "And now, it's going to be a matter of time to see where that wood supply will come from and whether or not the wood industry is able to find it elsewhere."

"What it does is it puts more pressure on the Crown (land) outside of the park and on private land sources of wood," he added.

Just what affect it will have directly on the demand for wood from county-owned forests remains to be seen, he said.

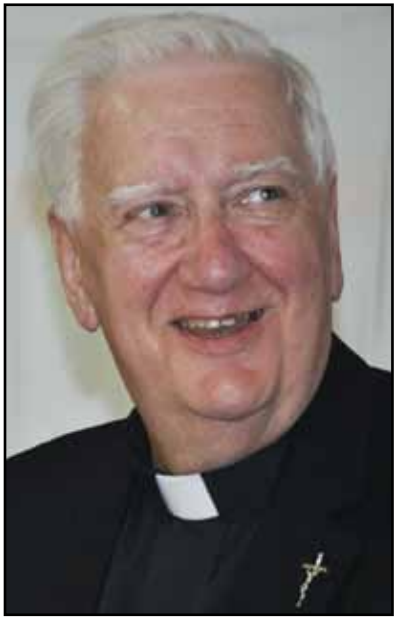
Mr. Moreau said the issue will be brought to the development and property committee meeting in August, which will in turn be bringing it forward to council for direction in terms of a response.

"The feedback we've received from the mill operators and the forest sector is surprise that it has occurred, especially when we thought it was on the shelf," he noted.

He said no explanation has been offered by the MNR for the change in policy.

"Rural Ontario has been struggling

and this is another one of the changes that our elected officials would like more input into before these policies occur," he noted.



Father Howard Chabot was charged Monday with gross indecency and sexual assault.

Priest faces sexual assault charge

By Gerald Tracey
News Editor

Pembroke -- A fourth Pembroke diocese priest has been charged with historical sexual crimes, sending a feeling of shock and disappointment throughout the wider Pembroke area.

Father Howard Chabot, a retired priest who last served full-time in the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Pembroke, was charged by the Ontario Provincial Police on Monday with gross indecency and sexual assault. The charges relate to an incident alleged to have occurred in 1985 when Fr. Chabot was serving at Holy Name Parish in Pembroke.

Fr. Chabot is originally from Arnprior and was ordained in 1968. He retired in 1995 due to poor health,

but has helped out in several parishes throughout the diocese.

The Bishop of Pembroke, the Most Reverend Michael Mulhall, issued a statement Monday promising complete co-operation with civil officials as the process unfolds.

"The Diocese of Pembroke prays that the truth concerning this matter may be brought to light and extends support to any parties concerned in this case," Bishop Mulhall said.

The Diocese of Pembroke will also encourage and support the healing process for all parties concerned following the resolution of the case, a release from the chancery office stated.

Fr. Chabot is the fourth priest from the diocese to be charged with historical sex crimes.

Msgr. Bernard Prince, a native of Wilno, was the first to be charged in 2007 while he was living in Rome. He returned to Canada to face the charges and in 2008 he was convicted of molesting 13 boys between 1964 and 1984, many of the incidents taking place at his cottage in the Barry's Bay area. Msgr. Prince had pled guilty to 12 of the 13 charges. Pope Benedict laicized him in May 2009.

Pembroke native Msgr. Robert Borne was charged in April 2009 with historical crimes after a year-long investigation by OPP. He eventually faced 19 charges related to allegations of sexual abuse of five teenage boys between the years 1977 and 1995. Five of the charges were later dismissed or withdrawn by the Crown.

Then, in July 2010, the judge ruled that eight charges related to three complainants should not proceed to trial.

Facing four charges -- two for indecent assault and two for gross indecency -- he was found guilty of both charges relating to a 1979 assault but was acquitted of the other two charges. He was given a conditional discharge. Msgr. Borne served in Eganville from 1995 to 2008.

Renfrew native Father Dan Miller pled guilty this past June to five counts of indecent assault. He was originally charged with 12 counts involving young boys while he was a priest at several parishes through the diocese. Fr. Miller will be sentenced in September.

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