

# OAM Presentation Atikokan Charleson Recreation Area Steep Rock and Caland Mine site Rehabilitation

---





# CHARLESON

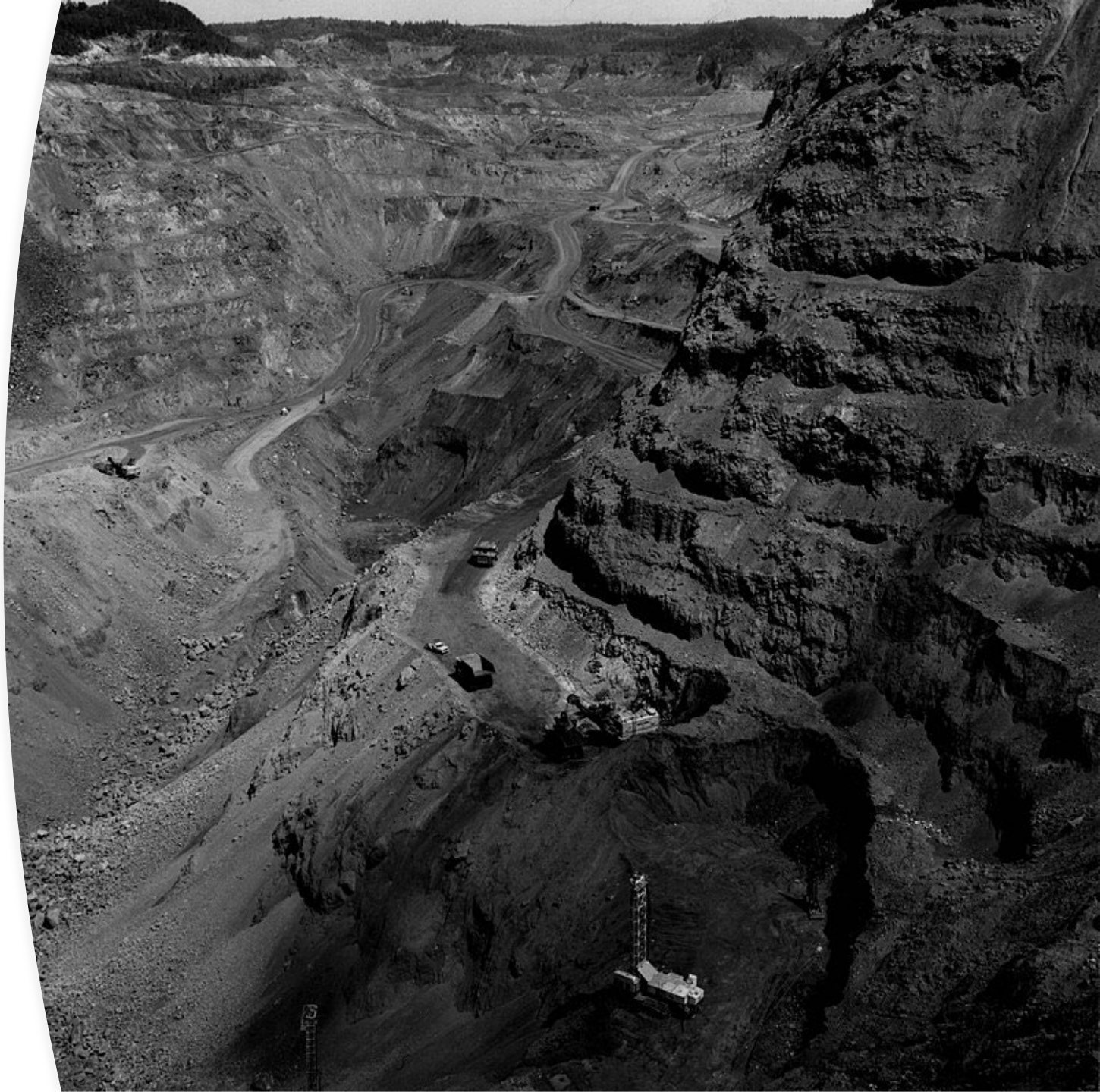
## RECREATION AREA





# History

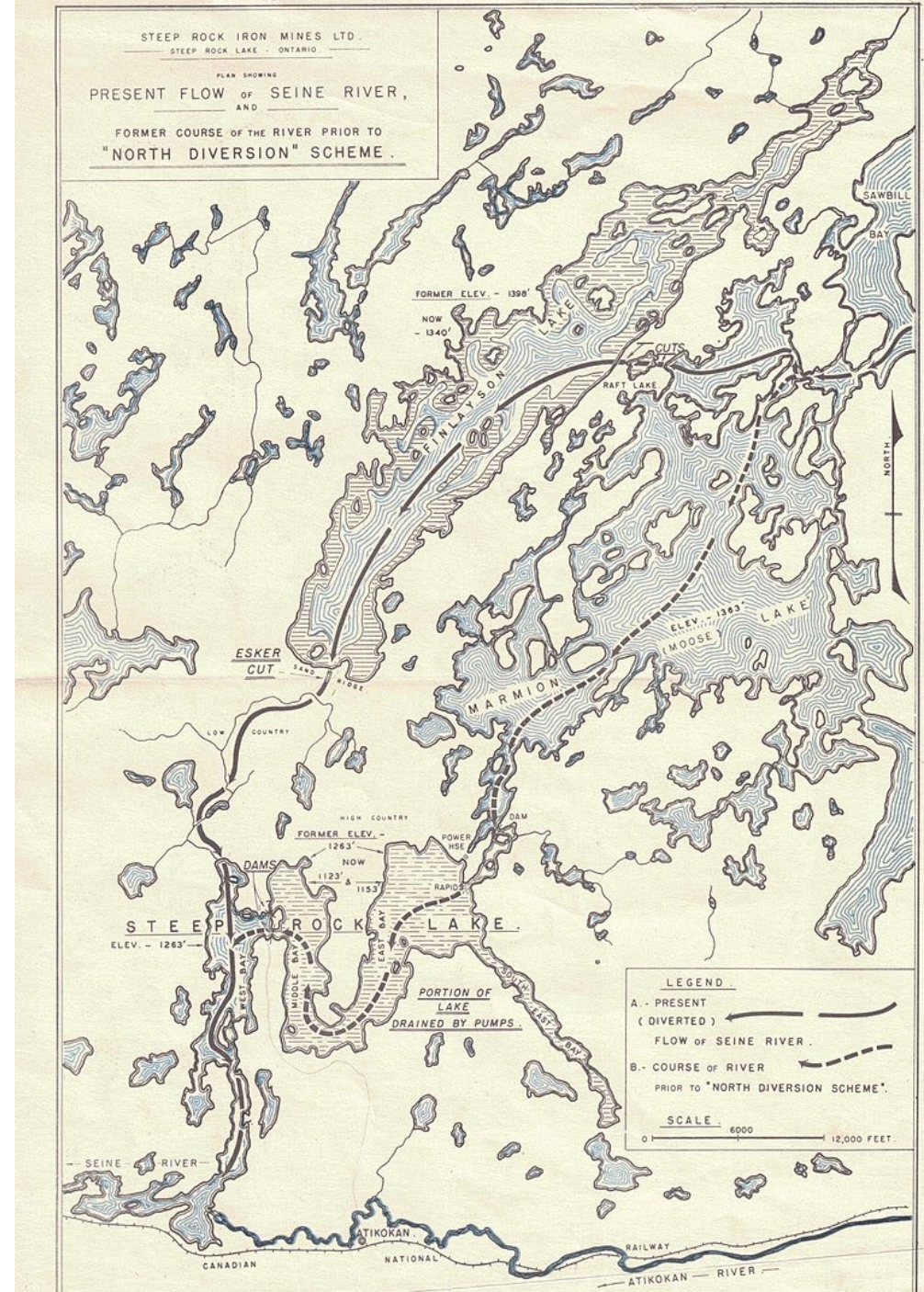
- The Caland and Steep Rock Iron Mines represent amazing feats of engineering and construction. Long before the days of computerized projections and simulations, engineers in the first half of the 20th century were able to accurately predict how moving 280 million cubic yards of water, silt and gravel would affect the area around what would be five of Canada's premier iron ore mines
- First opened in 1943, these mines would supply raw materials for everything from World War Two Hawker Hurricanes (made in Thunder Bay) to toasters and nails in the late 1970s. Although the mines closed in 1979 and 1980, they are still quite a sight to see- horrifying in their destruction of the land, but beautiful in their complexity.





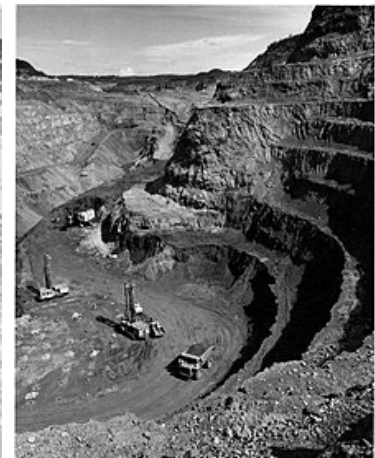
# History – Diversion Plan

- In March 1941, negotiations with the [Ontario Government](#) for the rights to dam off Steep Rock Lake were underway. This eventually allowed Steep Rock Iron Mines to dam up the area surrounding the lake. By March 1943, the diversion plan was completed, and the project started.
- A tunnel was dug that would lower the water level of Finlayson Lake and become a basin for the water leaving Steep Rock Lake. On July 23, 1943, a plug is blown at the bottom of Finlayson Lake which leads into a tunnel connecting to the [Seine River](#) to lower the water level in Finlayson.
- Through the fall of 1943, three dams were constructed and the first pumps were put into action in the middle arm of Steep Rock Lake to dewater that section. By May the water level had dropped 75 ft. Raft Lake (situated between Finlayson and Marmion Lake) was also lowered to connect the two larger lakes together to complete the diversion plan.
- All through the summer and winter of 1943, millions of tons of rock, gravel and earth were moved. More than a million cubic yards of rock had to be removed to create the canal between Raft Lake and Finlayson. When completed, it was six hundred yards long, a hundred feet wide, and as much as ninety feet deep in places.<sup>[17]</sup>
- By the new year, Both Raft and Finlayson Lakes had been drained to the required levels, dams were built-including the dam between Marmion Lake and Raft Lake known as the [Raft Lake Dam](#)- and the cuts and canals had been completed.
- On January 28, 1944, the Raft Lake and Finlayson Diversion cuts were blown, which rerouted the water flow away from Steep Rock Lake. The lake was finally an isolated body of water and the job of pumping and mining the lake bottom could begin.





# Then





# Now

<https://fb.watch/nBbTNAQSri>

<https://charlesonrecreationarea.com>





# How did the Recreation Project Happen?



A group of local citizens with a passion for different outdoor recreation activities formed a committee to explore the abandoned mine site as an area to develop. After several meetings and in cooperation with the Town of Atikokan a plan was developed.



From this plan, a grant was applied for and the group was successful in receiving \$1,000,000. An agreement was made with the user groups and the Town of Atikokan as to what responsibilities and roles each would play. To date this arrangement has worked well with volunteers from the user groups taking care of such things as grooming trails for various uses and prepping the Motocross race track with the Town responsible for the maintenance of buildings and roads as well as bookings for the facilities.



## **What about the actual mine pits?**

The MOE and MNRF have been engaged in long term discussions of enhanced natural recovery of the pits. The current water levels contain minerals that have been deemed unsafe. The MNRF has committed \$747 million dollars to ensure the water will be safe when it reaches its overspill point in 2070. The water levels are constantly monitored to predict water flows and the impact it will have on existing streams, rivers lakes as well as man made structures.



# What next?

The current user groups and the Town continue to meet regularly to discuss on going needs for the facilities and for events that are hosted. Some of the next steps at the recreation area include;

- providing hydro to the moto cross track so need for generators. This will lead to the development of overnight RV camping for visitors.
- more horse stalls as demand has been increasing yearly over the past 5 years