

ROBERT BATEMAN
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The Honourable Michael Chan, MPP
Minister of Tourism and Culture
Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario

March 7, 2011

Dear Minister Chan,

As a wildlife artist committed to a sustainable world, I am deeply distressed to hear of the destruction of the South March Highlands in Ottawa. I understand it is one of the most bio-diverse areas remaining in urban Canada, offering critical habitat to more than 675 species, including 240 species of wildlife, 135 nesting birds and 20 species at risk - and is considered culturally, archaeologically and environmentally significant.

I have learned through friends in Ontario that the members of the Algonquin Union and other prominent citizen groups have attempted to bring this to your attention many times recently – all the while the devastation of the old growth forest and grounds considered sacred by the Algonquin continues.

The new evidence of its archeological significance presented by the Algonquin Union in early February gives you the authority to put an immediate halt to the destruction of this extraordinary ecosystem.

I urge you to use everything in your personal and professional power to preserve the South March Highlands. The United Nations has declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests. Imagine the legacy you and your Ministry will leave by standing up for and protecting this treasured old-growth forest – not only for its Native cultural and spiritual heritage, but also for the all of the species that depend on its continued existence.

Please act now.

Respectfully,



Robert Bateman

Cc: Mayor Jim Watson, City of Ottawa
Daniel 'Amikwabe' Bernard, Algonquin of the Ottawa River Watershed
Paul Renaud, Coalition to Protect the South March Highlands