

# NEWS RELEASE / COMMUNIQUÉ

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## Niagara Parks Commission slashes hours of low income earners

NIAGARA FALLS – The Niagara Parks Commission will slash hours for up to 500 seasonal workers, a move the union says will not only hurt the workers but will contribute to the ever-worsening conditions of Niagara's parklands.

The Commission has decided to reduce the hours of the seasonal employees from 40 to 37.5. This amounts to a wage cut of over six per cent for workers whose earnings are at the poverty threshold. At the same time, many managers at the Commission appear on Ontario's "Sunshine List" of public sector employees earning over \$100,000 a year.

OPSEU Local 217 President Bill Rudd, who represents parks workers, said these cuts will hurt everyone.

"In a nutshell, the reduction of hours will result in less park maintenance," Rudd said. "Conditions in the Niagara Parks system have been steadily declining over the years due to job cuts. This latest move will only make it worse."

Rudd said that there will simply not be enough workers to keep the parks maintained. "We are responsible for 4,200 acres of park land. We didn't have enough staff to keep up before. Now it just got worse."

Rudd also said that the people of Niagara Falls should be horrified at what is happening.

"This region has the second-highest rate of unemployment in the province," Rudd said. "These cuts hurt the economy, and hurt our parks. Residents have a vested interest in both these areas, and unless they start having a say, the effects will be irreversible."

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