

History

The Ontario Ranger Program provided an opportunity for young workers to gain first-hand knowledge of resource management through a work and learning experience. More than 78,000 Ontario youth have participated in the 70-year old program.

In September 2012 – and without prior public consultation – the program was abruptly cancelled.

When the government cancelled the Ontario Ranger Program, it claimed the Stewardship Youth Ranger Program, an existing day program, would deliver the same experience and would offer more jobs. This is simply not the case whatsoever.

The Ontario Ranger Program (ORP) was a youth program run by the Ministry of Natural Resources. To apply to the ORP, you had to be in your 17th year and be a resident of Ontario. Students were paid the minimum wage and were required to cover their own room and board.

The selection process was random based on a postal-code lottery system. Typically if you were from Southern Ontario, you were placed at a northern camp; Northern Ontarians were enrolled at southern camps. The program consisted of work, education and recreation components. Each Ranger experienced similar work such as clearing trails, planting trees, maintaining canoe routes, fish and wildlife projects, collaborating with aboriginal groups, working in the kitchen, and camp maintenance. In recent years, camps were capped at 22 Rangers, but earlier on in its history, 35 or 40 youth could be at one camp.

The current day based program has local young people working in teams of four with one team leader. The program is limited to 29 smaller communities in various remote locations across the Province.

In previous years over half of the Ontario Rangers were students from large urban centres. Now, the only program being offered is just not accessible to youth in urban centres.

The Ontario Ranger Program had 13 camps in 2012 and employed 278 young people.

The cancellation of the Ontario Ranger Program has eliminated a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for young people.

