



RICK EGLINTON/TORONTO STAR

Highway 60 brings fall fans to Algonquin Park. What they don't see are logging roads, critics say, that make it an 'industrial zone.'

Logging roads criss-cross Algonquin

8,000 kilometres inside park lands

MNR map doesn't reveal full network

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CANADIAN PRESS

Despite its reputation as a vast untapped wilderness area, two environmental groups say they have discovered that Ontario's Algonquin Park actually has four times as much logging road as it does canoe trails.

The estimated 8,000 kilometres of roads, usually hidden from view and closed to the public, are detrimental to the area's habitat and run counter to the park's wild and pristine image, the groups say.

"If this was called the Algonquin Industrial Zone, it would

be reasonable to be doing this, (but) it's called a park because it's supposed to be protected," said Evan Ferrari, director of the Wildlands League.

An official map of the park produced by the Ministry of Natural Resources in response to a Freedom of Information request by the Sierra Legal Defence Fund shows only about 1,300 kilometres of primary and secondary roads.

A more detailed map obtained by the Wildlands League reveals a network of logging roads through much of the park, about three-quarters of which has already been logged.

"For every kilometre of canoe route in Algonquin Park, there are more than four kilometres of road," said Anastasia Lintner, a lawyer with the defence fund.

That would mean there are more kilometres of road in the

765,000-hectare park than in the city of Toronto, or running between Halifax and Vancouver.

Environmentalists say the logging roads — about 20 metres wide to accommodate heavy equipment — have a "huge" im-

Mostly hidden logging roads, 20-metres wide, fragment forest habitat

pact on the eco-system because of the habitat fragmentation they cause.

"We completely change the plants and animals that are in an area once we continue to cut up the forest," said Ferrari.

In last week's throne speech, the Liberal government promised legislation to "ensure our precious provincial parks are

protected forever."

Natural Resources Minister David Ramsay said in an interview he had no plans to end logging in Algonquin Park as the environmentalists want.

"Historically, Algonquin Park area has been a mixed-use area," he said in an interview. "That's just the way it's been."

Environmentalists worry that logging interests in Algonquin, considered the jewel in

Ontario's parks system, will win the day and end up destroying the park completely. They want Ramsay to order a comprehensive review of all impacts of logging.

"We can't stop logging tomorrow and throw people onto the street," said Ferrari. "(But) how do we make that a park instead of an industrial zone?"