

Algonquin — Park or Industrial Zone?



Photographer: Evan Ferrari

Algonquin Park's iconic nature has been immortalized by the Group of Seven in paintings and loved by generations of Canadians. When visitors arrive at Toronto's Pearson International Airport, a huge billboard lets travellers know that they are only 250 kilometres away from Ontario's park - Algonquin.

But there's a hidden story behind the park that belies the magnificent images created by our country's most famous painters. Over 57% is "managed" for logging.

Algonquin has been logged since its creation in 1893. Since that time, our understanding of natural ecosystems and protected areas has changed radically. Ecological Integrity is now the overarching principle - not profit. The new Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act prohibits industrial use of logging, mining and hydroelectric development in parks and conservation reserves, except in our beloved Algonquin.

Wildlands League has been advocating for complete protection of Algonquin Park since 1968. A report by the Ontario Parks Board released in May recommends increasing protection from 22% to 54% while maintaining jobs in the logging industry. This Report provides a direction that is very respectful of current economic commitments while reducing the impacts of industrial activity on the park.

A poll conducted by McAllister Research in March of this year shows that 79% of Ontarians are opposed to logging in parks. Furthermore, 90 percent agree that Ontario should protect more forests as a shield against global warming.

Isn't it time we get logging out of Algonquin Provincial Park?

what's inside



ALGONQUIN - PARK?



ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT



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PASSING THE TORCH

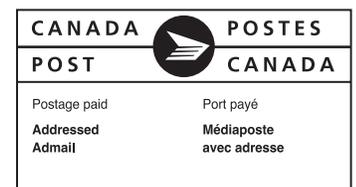
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Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park



Photographer: Evan Ferrari - Killarney Provincial Park

CPAWS Wildlands League supports the Ontario Parks Board in their recent report recommendations. Here is a summary of the recommendations:

- 1** Increase protection by 241,032 hectares to include a total of 409,482 hectares or 54 % of the park (without affecting logging jobs).
- 2** Reduce the impacts of logging including a review of roads standards, aggregate use, size of pits, and use of temporary bridges.

- 3** Pilot a project to test more detailed forest resource inventory to enhance accuracy of planning and better integrate the protection and harvesting objectives where logging continues.

We believe there is additional data that must be considered before finalizing the new protected areas in the park. There are some concerns that the current proposal to increase riparian protection (buffers from all waterways) from 30 metres to 200 metres may not be significant enough to protect some genetically significant Brook Trout and habitat.

Also, researchers recently found that there may be over 30,000 hectares of Old Growth forests that will remain vulnerable to logging, even after the increase in protection proposed by the Ontario Parks Board. The Board report definitely increases protection of some additional old growth habitat. However, logging any old growth forests in a Park in 2007 is simply unacceptable. The report must be modified to confirm the existence of these old growth stands and include them in the new protected areas.

And finally, the impact of 8,000 kilometres of logging roads in a Park is offensive. It flies in the face of protecting ecological integrity and it weakens our shield against global warming. Something is drastically wrong when Algonquin Provincial Park has over 8,000 kilometres of roads and a large metropolitan city like Toronto has 5,300 kilometres.

To read the full report go to: www.ebr.gov.on.ca

Algonquin Park — Recent Developments

- ✓ The new Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act makes it illegal to log in all of Ontario's protected areas except one - Algonquin.
- ✓ Through the Freedom of Information Act, CPAWS Wildlands League identified over 8,000 kilometres of roads (primarily for logging) crisscrossing Algonquin Park. This is more than 4 times the length of canoe routes in the park. These roads significantly worsen the habitat fragmentation problems associated with logging, increase the chance of introducing
- invasive species, and threaten genetically significant trout fisheries.
- ✓ Researchers found old growth forests within the areas designated for logging that have never been properly mapped or identified - pointing once again to the woefully poor data available for park protection and logging in the park.
- ✓ In 2005, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario strongly recommended the province conduct a complete review of logging in the park.

Roads in a Park

Along with its steadily increasing recreational popularity, Algonquin Park has another less known fact: over 8,000 kilometres of logging roads riddle the heart of the park.

This number has steadily increased from 2,240 km in 1968. That's 5,760 km of logging roads built in less than 40 years.

Roads fundamentally change the forest landscape. They remove tracts of forest and change the character of the ecosystem far into adjacent areas. They cleave wildlife habitats and usher in invasive species. Roads bring pollution, noise and sediment, and they interfere with waterways.

The 8,000 km of logging roads in Algonquin occupy about 16,000 hectares (2.1% of the Park), excluding gravel pits and landings that also remove forest. By contrast, the natural environment in the Park is 13,765 ha (or 1.8%).

This intensive network removes from the Park productive forest indefinitely, taking ecological services that include at least .5 million tons of carbon storage. Road construction and maintenance involve large quantities of gravel, requiring many quarries



Photographer: Evan Ferrari - Massassauga Park

to provide material, and causing waterway sedimentation, exhaust, noise, dust, and chemical spills.

Many less visible ecosystem effects are also attributable to these linear disturbances. Roads fragment habitat, and create more "edge," forcing change upon the species composition of the forest. Traffic causes road kills and roads change predator-prey relationships, while increasing illegal access for hunting and fishing. Roads impair waterway functions for aquatic species. Vehicles carry hitchhiking weeds, and non-native fish are introduced in anglers' bait buckets. Aggressive aliens now threaten the priceless heritage of

Algonquin's native plants and world famous trout waters.

The Ontario Park's Board recently recognized that this road network is contributing to an unsustainable conflict in the Park, and drew attention to these concerns in their December 2006 recommendations to the Minister of Natural Resources.

For more information on the impacts of roads, please see our report: "Roads: more than just lines on a map" in the publications section of our website!

Take Action

Algonquin Park is being logged. Surprisingly only 14% of Ontarians are aware this.

CPAWS Wildlands League believes that a park is a park and not a place for industry.

The recent Ontario Parks Board report clearly states that we can increase protection in Algonquin from 22% to 54% - without affecting any of the logging industry jobs. Please let the province know that they must implement the report and protect another 2,500 square kilometres of Algonquin now.

This would be a great start, but ultimately Canada's first and oldest provincial park must be free of logging. We must be working towards a complete logging phase out, one that helps local communities around the park move to a new economy.

Algonquin Park identifies us as Canadians around the world, and yet we treat it so poorly. The Parks Board report proves that it's time to turn our attention to Algonquin Provincial Park and bring it into the 21st century.

Even though the official comment period has ended you can still send a letter to the Premier. *YOUR VOICE MUST BE HEARD*. Let him know that Algonquin is important to you. You can send him a letter directly from our website www.savealgonquin.ca or you can send him a letter at the following address:

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW!

Premier Dalton McGuinty
Legislative Building
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A1

Photographer: Evan Ferrari - Massassauga Park



Supporter Profile



Bruce Litteljohn is an historian, an educator, a widely published photographer, author, and editor with a 40-year record of conservation and environmental service.

Bruce Litteljohn joined Algonquin Wildlands League (as it was then called), as a board director in 1968. He served for 27 years, and was chair of the Quetico committee during the turbulent but successful campaign to rid Quetico of destructive commercial logging and have it designated as a “primitive” park. In 1973, it became the first readily-accessible wilderness park in Ontario, forever changing how we view Ontario’s parks.

In 1976 Bruce wrote a scathing full page Globe & Mail article entitled *Leaky umbrella policy dooming Algonquin Park* in which he declared “Algonquin is little more than a large timber-management unit surrounded by thin veils of deception, aptly

symbolized by the equally thin cosmetic fringes of trees, which are sometimes left along waterways in the ‘park’.” He closed the article with this comment to the Premier, “Make it what you call it, Mr. Davis, or call it what it is.”

As for now, he says “my views haven’t changed much.”

Wildlands League is extraordinarily lucky to have forerunners like Bruce Litteljohn who set a high standard for environmental conservation and for successful outcomes. Bruce recently told me: “the League remains very close to my heart”, and I know we are very grateful for his dedication, hard work and many, many achievements for Ontario’s wilderness.

PASSING THE TORCH



In the not too distant past, a group of passionate and dedicated environmentalists gathered to form the Algonquin Wildlands League with a dream and vision to protect wilderness in Ontario. The year was 1968. The province had 84 parks, covering 1.7 million hectares and none were protected from resource development.

Almost forty years later with countless hours of dedication we can boast over six hundred parks, covering more than four million hectares. All but one park, our beloved Algonquin, is now protected in law from resource development.

And we are not done!

Ontario’s far north holds over 37 million hectares of pristine boreal wilderness. This is the world’s largest terrestrial carbon sink, home to the endangered Woodland Caribou, and millions of our cherished songbirds. It is a unique global treasure in our own backyard!

Our conservation vision is a landscape that thrives and survives. With intact forests, clean wetlands, waters and filtering systems. An intact ecosystem, a buffer against global warming, and wildlife not forced from existence.

2008 marks Wildlands League’s 40th Anniversary and the theme is passing the torch to our children. Please help fulfill our vision. Let your torch be a priceless legacy by making a planned gift with a bequest in your will, or a gift of life insurance.

For information contact: Nicole Thouard at 416-971-9453 ext. 41