

Our History and Track Record

HECTARES AT A GLANCE

New Protected Areas from
1997-1999:
2.4 million ha

New Parks Act raises level of
protection in all protected
areas to ecological integrity:
9.7 million ha

KI Land Withdrawal = no
mining:
2.6 million ha

New No Logging Zone +
existing protection in the
Abitibi River Caribou Plan:
800,000ha

Wildlands League was established in 1968 to “ensure the heritage of Algonquin and other parks in Ontario significant for their natural characteristics are passed on intact to succeeding generations”.

We were successful in increasing the amount of land protected in Algonquin in the 1970s (160,000 ha). Also in the 1970's, through our efforts Lady Evelyn, Killarney and Quetico were established as wilderness parks. We also got logging out of Quetico, Killarney and Lake Superior Provincial Park.

In 1978, we successfully fought for the establishment of a park planning system for Ontario.

In 1980, we joined the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society and began leveraging our experience nationally.

With partners, Wildlands League played a lead role in establishing over 2.4 million ha of new protected areas through the Lands for Life land use planning process from 1997-1999. We then spent the next few years detangling mining claims from these new protected areas.

In the 1990s and 2000s, we were national leaders in the formation of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) which established standards for good forestry and provides certification for companies that adhere to these standards. We worked on the very first certification of the Boreal Forest in the world in the Gordon Cosens Forest in Ontario.

We continue to be strong supporters of FSC in Canada to this day. We participate in the development of standards and are recognized leaders in the implementation of FSC.

In 2007, Wildlands League and Sierra Legal Defence Fund (now Ecojustice) efforts resulted in a new *Provincial Parks and Conservation Areas Act* (PPCRA). This new legislation enshrined ecological integrity (EI) as the management priority for protected areas.

In 2007, Wildlands League and colleagues worked to secure new endangered species legislation in Ontario. At the time it was considered the gold standard in North America.

In 2008, we worked with Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI), an Indigenous Nation located 500km NW of Thunder Bay, to stop

unwanted mineral exploration on its lands in the globally significant Boreal Forest. Our joint campaign on the 'Right to Say No' captured the nation's attention. It resulted in a land withdrawal of 2.6 million hectares from mining development activities and improvements to the mining regime in Ontario.

In 2009, Wildlands League helped modernize the outdated mining regime in Ontario through a new *Mining Act*. The government introduced a permitting regime for mining exploration and innovative dispute resolution mechanism.

In 2010, we worked to enshrine the principle of First Nation approved land use plan prior to development in the Far North, a target for protecting half the Far North with First Nations, and acknowledgement in law of global significance of the carbon stores in wetlands here. This Act covers over 45 million hectares of Ontario and at the time was the first of its kind in Canada.

Also in 2010, Wildlands League played a lead role in rerouting a 430km transmission line away from intact caribou habitat and from Wabakimi Provincial Park. The line would have also degraded the remoteness of Lake Nipigon.

In 2012, we produced the first caribou action plan under the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement. Focusing on the Kesagami Range in Northeastern Ontario, it keeps over 800,000 ha free from logging.

In 2013, our work was instrumental to increase the amount of protected land again in Algonquin Park, up to 35% and removing an additional 14% from logging. Unfortunately, half the park still remains open to logging. It is the only park in Ontario to allow this.

In 2015, the Ontario Court of Appeal granted Wildlands League and Ontario Nature leave to appeal a lower court ruling that puts already endangered species at further risk of extinction. This marks the first time environmental groups won the right to appeal to the Ontario Court of Appeal on a case about the *Endangered Species Act* (ESA) or about endangered species.

In 2015, Wildlands League brought to light the risks of mercury methylation in the Hudson Bay Lowlands, and the need to address failures of self-monitoring and reporting at a mine.

In 2016, Wildlands League and allies improved the management of the proposed Rouge National Urban Park by ensuring ecological integrity was the priority in management in law, opening the path for Ontario to transfer lands and increase the size of the park.