



WILDLANDS LEAGUE

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Environmental Group Applauds ECO's Call to End Logging in Algonquin Park

TORONTO –CPAWS Wildlands League, a leading conservation group in the province, welcomes the Environmental Commissioner's latest report, which calls for an end to logging in Ontario's Algonquin Park. Wildlands League has been working to remove logging from Algonquin since 1968.

"Canadians will be surprised to learn that more than half of the park is dedicated to industrial logging," said Janet Sumner, Executive Director for the group. "Algonquin Park is supposed to be the jewel in the crown of the Ontario park system. In reality, however, the park is being damaged and degraded due to threats from within because of logging and road building," Sumner says.

It is the only park in Ontario where logging is permitted. The group says it's time Ontario caught up to the latest science and recognized that logging is incompatible with a protected area.

"Even the most careful operations can threaten species at risk and compromise ecosystem values. Protected areas must provide a haven from such threats," Dave Pearce, Forest Conservation manager commented. Unfortunately, with the current density of logging roads in Algonquin Park, up to 70% of the park is fragmented, the group notes.

Canadians might also be surprised to learn that Algonquin has more roads in it than the City of Toronto. 5,400 km of roads criss cross the park to facilitate logging operations. This is nearly equivalent to the distance of the trans-Canada Highway between Halifax and Vancouver.

The internationally accepted definition of a protected area requires that nature conservation be the top priority. The continuation of the logging and road building in Algonquin Park raises serious questions about whether it should even be called a park in the first place, the group states.

Wildlands League has been calling for a scientific assessment of all uses in Algonquin and a prioritized action list on how to improve ecological integrity as required by law. Their view is that logging is incompatible with this legal requirement and must be phased out over time.

"The good news is that there is strong evidence that the surrounding crown land can supply all the current wood supply needs of local mills. Therefore, we have the opportunity to fully protect all the wondrous lakes and enchanting forests of Algonquin Park forever and maintain a healthy forest industry at the same time', concludes Sumner. The group says that Ontario must act quickly on this recommendation so that park managers can began the process of restoring Algonquin's damaged ecosystems.

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