

In case the Government of Ontario responds and suggests everything is fine with logging in Algonquin Park because the province is a world leader in forest management, here's one way to respond.

Feel free to edit.

Two lines of evidence raise serious questions about Ontario's claims of being world leader in forest management:

- a) the loss of approximately 600,000 ha of productive forest due to logging scars. These are areas remaining barren long after the clearcutting has ended. You can see the evidence here <https://loggingcars.ca/report/>, and
- b) the decline of boreal caribou, a threatened species in Ontario. Logging has been one of the main drivers responsible for damaging and destroying habitat.

Algonquin Park is the only park left in Ontario that allows commercial forestry operations. What might have made sense 100 years ago makes little sense today. Logging is incompatible with the maintenance of ecological integrity - the priority for managing provincial parks and conservation reserves in Ontario. The time is long overdue to move the operations outside the park and for park managers to design and implement a restoration plan to address the decades of the footprint from logging and roads.

The park system should maintain and anchor ecological values in Ontario and this is done by requiring all parks be managed for ecological integrity as reflected in the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserve Act, 2006* (PPCRA). Algonquin has been so heavily road-ed and logged that it may not be much different from other industrial forests. It means we've lost an ecological benchmark and anchor for the region.

The system of logging in Algonquin - the selection and shelterwood systems - requires repeated entry by industrial machinery. That means that roads are essentially permanent in Algonquin. The 5487 km of road with a minimum right of way of 9m means that at least 5,000 ha are permanently deforested (there are also open gravel pits and other permanent disturbances), and will not be storing carbon when we need it most. This results in a minimum current loss of 1

million tonnes of stored carbon based on an estimate of southern Ontario forests storing 200 tonnes per ha^[1].

OMNRF's own commissioned report^[2] details additional impacts of roads:

- Areas without roads have higher levels of native diversity and fewer invasive species.
- Roads can end up blocking fish passage, damaging fish habitat
- Roads can lead to increased exploitation of fish. They can alter hydrology and groundwater recharge and discharge (upwelling springs in lakes are essential for brook trout spawning.)
- Sediment and water nutrient loading can have impacts 4 km from the point source. Small buffers (30-120 m) are far too narrow.
- Roads fragment habitat for interior forest bird species especially, increasing the amount of edge habitat. They can limit movement between habitats. Mammals, reptiles and amphibians can be impacted as far as 2km from roads.
- Roads can subsidize populations of generalist predators, with road-killed carrion and garbage and facilitating movement. These common predators then are increased threats to songbird populations.

I support jobs and ensuring wood supply needs from logging are met **outside the park's boundaries.**

Algonquin Park is one of the last refuges of original hemlock, yellow birch, and sugar maple forests in Ontario. Did you know that ~24,000 ha of the oldest forest (>150 years) in Algonquin Park are unprotected? Ancients Forests and Research (AFER) has shown that some of the finest examples of old-growth forest in the Province remain open to logging in Algonquin. This is unacceptable. These forests must be immediately protected.

Ontario is in a climate emergency and biodiversity crisis. It's time for the province to show leadership and move logging operations outside of the park and begin a restoration plan for Algonquin. We know this can be done. It would increase the overall health of the region to have a true ecological benchmark like Algonquin meet its mandate to be restored as per ecological integrity mandate.

[1] Colombo, S.J., J. Chen and M.T. Ter-Mikaelian. Carbon Storage in Ontario's Forests, 2000-2100. Climate Change Research Information Note Number 6, 2007. Ontario Applied Research and Development Branch.

[2] Algonquin Cottage Lease Background Report Literature Review. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. January 2013.

Ontario is falling behind the world's leaders on nature. Ambitious countries such as Costa Rica, France, United Kingdom, Canada and now the United States are committing to protecting 30% of their lands and waters by 2030. It's time Ontario get on board. Its protection levels have been stuck at 10.7% for many many years. An excellent first step would be to finally get logging out of Algonquin to ensure it keeps its status as the premier flagship park in Ontario. If you want to demonstrate responsible forest management, first step is do it outside the park's boundaries.

Thank you for your consideration.