



WILDLANDS LEAGUE

A chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

MEDIA RELEASE

More Protection for Algonquin

Toronto, November 2, 2009 - A leading conservation organization, CPAWS Wildlands League, is applauding an announcement to protect more of Algonquin Provincial Park. Today, the province posted a notice on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry accepting the report by the Algonquin Forestry Authority (AFA) Board and Ontario Parks Board to increase the amount of protection from the current 22% to 35%, a more than 50% increase. The total area off limits to logging will now be 371,238 hectares - an area equal to six times the size of Toronto. Currently logging is illegal in all of Ontario's 631 protected areas with the exception of Algonquin.

In 2008 Minister of Natural Resources Donna Cansfield charged the two boards to work together to undertake focused consultation with the Algonquins of Ontario, the forest industry, and key stakeholder groups to develop joint recommendations. Their joint proposal recommendations include:

- Expanding the area within protection zones by approximately 98,000 hectares, to enhance protection for canoe routes, brook trout lakes and cultural heritage values
- Implementing best management practices that lessen the impact of roads and other forest operations, including continuation of the existing roads strategy
- Clarifying the forested areas available for logging by recommending everything else, including areas zoned for protection; forested areas protected by park policy, such as buffer zones along waterways and portages, and non-forested areas such as lakes/rock barrens not be available for logging

"We're pleased with the decision to protect more of Algonquin Park" said Janet Sumner, Executive Director, CPAWS Wildlands League, "This increase in protection is better for Algonquin **AND** guarantees the current level of wood supply to area mills."

"Algonquin is as Canadian as maple sugar and the Group of Seven" Evan Ferrari, Director, Parks Program, CPAWS Wildlands League. "This moves us closer to protecting the ecological integrity of one of our country's most famous parks."

Decisions like this are especially important in an era of global warming. Large forests like the ones in Algonquin are critical in providing wildlife with room to adapt as the planet warms.

"Ultimately we want to see logging phased out of Algonquin, with a plan to diversify local economies that have depended in the past on logging" concluded Sumner.

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The Wildlands League's mission is to protect wilderness through the establishment of protected areas and through the promotion of natural resource use that is sustainable for nature, communities and the economy.

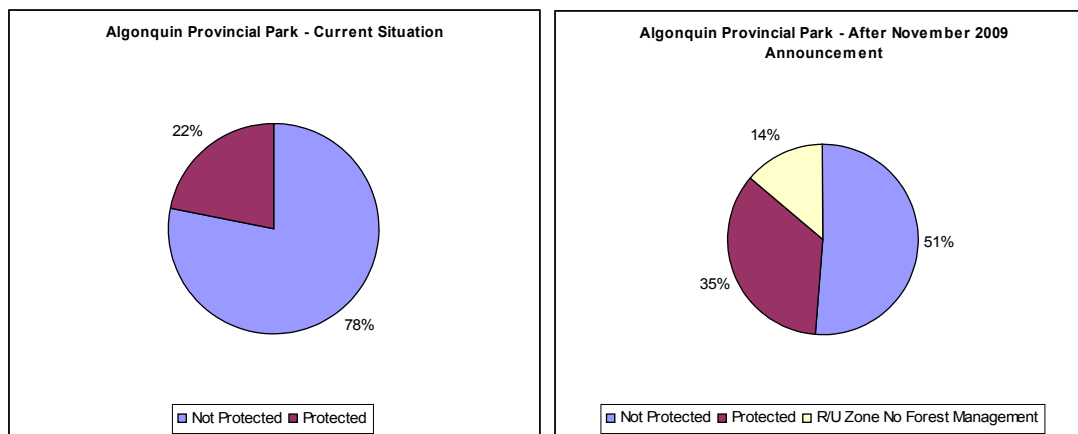
Background

Algonquin Park Quick Stats:

- 1893 = Year Algonquin created
- 763,554 hectares (7,635 square kilometres) = Total area within Algonquin Boundary:
- 12 times the size of Toronto (city boundary 63,018 hectares)
- 2,000 km = Total length of canoe routes in Algonquin
- 5,300 kilometres = Total length of roads within Algonquin
- Total road distance = Driving from Algonquin to Florida and back

Protection in Algonquin:

- Currently protected = 22% (168,450 hectares)
- November 2, 2009 Announcement = 49% (371,238 hectares)



Algonquin was originally established to protect logging from the rapid clearing and urbanization occurring in Ontario in the late 1800s. In fact most provincial parks in Ontario have had some historic logging in them at one time. Things have changed considerably since then, including the fact that over 1 million people a year visit the park adding positively to Algonquin’s socioeconomic impact to the area. Our understanding of the science of protected areas has changed drastically since then also. In the new Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act 2006 (PPCRA), ecological integrity has become the overarching principle of park management – not industrial extraction of resources. As a result, logging is now prohibited in all of Ontario’s 631 protected areas, except the oldest, Algonquin.

During the public consultation for the PPCRA, the province received considerable pressure to put an end to all logging in the park. Former Minister David Ramsay charged the Ontario Parks Board with the task of recommending a way of reducing the impact of logging in the park while maintaining wood supply. In “Ontario Parks Board Report: Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Provincial Park December 8, 2006” (http://www.wildlandsleague.org/attachments/document_en.pdf) the Ontario Parks Board

recommended that the current 22% of protection could be increased to 54% of the park, without affecting wood supply.

In response, the Algonquin Forestry Authority (AFA) submitted a letter to the Minister's staff dated December 14, 2006 suggesting that it recommended moving from 22% to 49% (<http://www.wildlandsleague.org/attachments/AFA.comment.on.Parks.Board.report.pdf>).

After the election in the fall of 2007, new Minister Donna Cansfield asked the Parks Board and the AFA to provide her with a joint recommendation regarding LTF. The joint committee conducted research and began consultation with First Nations and outreach to various stakeholders including the forest industry, municipalities, local communities, and NGOs.

The final joint report was delivered to Minister Cansfield in September 2009. By this point it had been almost three years since the original LTF report was submitted to the previous Minister. It was no surprise that the new 2009 joint report recommend increasing protection from 22% to approximately 49% (over 200,000 ha.) without affecting current wood supply to mills.

This announcement is the result of this process.

Government Announcement

<http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/displaynoticecontent.do?noticeId=MTA4MDkx&statusId=MTYyMzUy&language=en>