



Algonquin

Background Information for a
Proposed Amendment to the
Algonquin Provincial Park
Management Plan
To Address the Joint Proposal for
Lightening the Ecological Footprint of
Logging in Algonquin Park

December 3, 2009



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1.0 Introduction

Provincial parks in Ontario are managed in accordance with provisions of the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act* (2006). This act permanently protects a system of provincial parks and conservation reserves that is representative of Ontario's natural regions, protects provincially significant natural and cultural features, maintains biodiversity, provides opportunities for ecologically sustainable outdoor recreation, provides opportunities for increasing knowledge and appreciation of natural and cultural heritage, facilitates scientific research, and manages these areas to ensure that ecological integrity is maintained. Park management plans are prepared for provincial parks in accordance with the provisions of the act. Objectives and policies that guide the management of Algonquin Provincial Park are described in the Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan (1998).

Timber may be harvested for commercial purposes in Algonquin Provincial Park in accordance with the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act* (2006), the *Algonquin Forestry Authority Act* (1990), the Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan and the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act* (1994).

1.1 Joint Proposal for Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park

The Minister of Natural Resources asked the Ontario Parks Board and the Algonquin Forestry Authority (AFA) Board to work together to develop and submit joint recommendations to lighten the ecological footprint of logging in Algonquin Park. The Minister of Natural Resources accepted the recommendations in the Joint Proposal for Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park on November 6, 2009.

The report recommends an increase in protection zoning to enhance the protection of important park values. The values proposed for enhanced protection include ecologically representative sites, canoe routes, cultural heritage sites, brook trout lakes, and connections between existing protection zones. The proposed enhancements, as mapped in the Boards' report would increase protection zones from 22% to 35% (an increase of approximately 98,202 hectares) of the total park area. This would be implemented through an amendment to the park management plan.

The report also recommends that an additional 14% (approximately 105,493 hectares including rock, water, swamps, and forested reserves) of the total park area would:

- remain in the Recreation/Utilization Zone;
- continue to be unavailable for forest management; and
- contribute to the summary of area protected from (or not available for) logging.

The intent of these recommendations in the Joint Proposal would be implemented through forest management planning, forest operations strategies, and communications materials.

Overall, the Boards' joint recommendations would result in 49% (approximately 371,238 hectares) of the total park area that would not be available for forest management. Appendix C of the Joint Report provides a comparison of the current and proposed areas for protection.

1.2 Algonquin Park Management Plan Amendment Process

The Ontario Protected Areas Planning Manual (2009) provides the planning process for amending park management plans. The first stage in the plan amendment process is to provide background information for public comment. The second stage comprises the proposed amendment to the Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan which will address the recommendations from the Joint Proposal for Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park.

This park plan amendment will include two opportunities for public consultation as follows: (1) review of background information, and (2) review of the proposed amendment.

1.3 Context for a Management Plan Amendment

The Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan (1998) is the approved policy that guides the development and management of Algonquin Park. The park management plan sets the direction for all other management strategies and implementation activities developed for the park (e.g., wildlife, forest, fisheries, etc.), and defines zoning and permitted uses. Areas within the park are zoned on the basis of resource, cultural and recreational characteristics. Planning and management policies are applied to each zone and intended to fulfill a variety of objectives.

Recognizing the interrelationship of natural resources and the Ministry's commitment to sustainability and ecological integrity, the proposed amendment will enhance protection measures while maintaining the overall supply of forest products to the forest industry.

1.4 Scope of the Amendment

The amendment to the Algonquin Park Management Plan will address only the recommendations contained in the Joint Proposal for Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park, as accepted by the Minister of Natural Resources. Logging in the Recreation/Utilization (R/U) Zone of Algonquin Park will continue.

The area proposed for protection zoning in the amendment would be removed from the R/U Zone and be added to the Natural Environment, Wilderness, and Nature Reserve Zones. Cultural heritage values identified in the proposed protection zoning would be considered for Historical Zoning.

As part of the plan amendment process, zone boundaries will be defined and mapped. This information will be provided at the next stage in the proposed amendment.

Key considerations and amendment options are presented in this background document. These considerations, together with the details found in the Joint Proposal for Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park, will guide the preparation of specific management plan policies during the development of the proposed plan amendment.

2.0 Summary of Recommendations from the Joint Proposal for Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park

The recommendations of the Joint Proposal for Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park were accepted by the Minister of Natural Resources on November 6, 2009 and included:

1. A recommendation that all area in Algonquin Park that is not available for forest management contribute to the summary of area protected from (or not available for) logging.
2. A recommendation related to the expansion of protection zones by 98,202 hectares to enhance the protection of important park values.

3. A recommendation related to operational and planning strategies that will contribute to a lighter footprint in the areas where forest management activities occur.
4. Implementation strategies for consideration when amending the park management plan.

These recommendations are further considered in the following section.

3.0 Park Management Plan Amendment Considerations

This section provides information about how the recommendations of the Joint Proposal for Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park would be addressed through an amendment to the Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan.

Some of the recommendations of the Joint Proposal would also need to be addressed through other means, such as amendments to the Algonquin Park Forest Management Plan and forest operations strategies.

3.1 Zoning

Areas within Algonquin Park are zoned to allocate their resource values to their most appropriate use in this natural environment class park. Zoning is based on an area's significance for protection and potential for recreation and resource uses. Algonquin Park has seven zone types: Nature Reserve, Wilderness, Natural Environment, Historical, Development, Access, and Recreation/Utilization. The first four of these are referred to as protection zoning in this document.

Specific zone boundaries will be developed in the mapping process for the proposed amendment to the Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan, and will increase protection zoning from the current 22% to approximately 35% of the total park area, as recommended in the Joint Proposal for Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park.

The amendment will identify appropriate zoning for the additional protection zoning, as follows:

1. Areas that contribute to ecological representation of landform/vegetation features may become Nature Reserve Zones. Nature Reserve Zones are defined in the Algonquin Park Management Plan (Section 6.1) as *any significant earth and life science features that require management distinct from that in adjacent zones.*

2. Areas that are contiguous with existing Wilderness Zones or areas that improve connectivity between existing protection zones may be added to existing Wilderness Zones. Wilderness Zones are defined in the Algonquin Park Management Plan (Section 6.2) as *wilderness landscapes of appropriate size and integrity that protect significant natural and cultural features and are suitable for wilderness experiences.*
3. Areas that are along waterways may become Natural Environment Zones. Natural Environment Zones are defined in the Algonquin Park Management Plan (Section 6.3) as *aesthetic landscapes in which there is minimum development required to support low-intensity recreational activities.*
4. Areas that include significant cultural features may become Historical Zones. Historical Zones are defined in the Algonquin Park Management Plan (Section 6.4) as *any significant historical resources that require management distinct from that in adjacent zones.*

Areas not proposed for protection zoning will remain as Recreation/Utilization Zone. Recreation/Utilization Zones are defined in the Algonquin Park Management Plan (Section 6.7) as *aesthetic landscapes in which there is minimum development required to support low-intensity recreational activities and which also provide for commercial forest management. To the greatest extent possible, they will be planned, developed and managed in accordance with the policies set out for Natural Environment Zones.* The proposed increase in protection zoning would result in a decrease of the R/U Zone. The R/U Zone that results from this park plan amendment would be reflected in the Algonquin Park Forest Management Plan.

3.2 Roads and Landings

The Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan contains provisions to guide the management of roads and landings.

The proposed management plan amendment will enable practical road access, in keeping with the recommendations in the Joint Proposal for Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park. For example:

- If an existing road is located within the proposed protection zoning, and road closures or relocation is not practical, the road would form the boundary of the protection zone provided that the road is greater than 120m from the water's edge of the lake or river.
- Practical access to the Recreation/Utilization Zone would be provided to access forest resources for harvesting and tending.

3.3 Aggregate Extraction

In accordance with the Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan, the proposed management plan amendment would not allow aggregate extraction from within the proposed protection zoning, and would direct existing aggregate extraction pits within the proposed protection zones to be closed and rehabilitated.

Section 18(3) of the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act* (2006) allows for aggregate pits to be established in the Recreation/Utilization Zone to support forestry in Algonquin Park in accordance with the Algonquin Park Management Plan, provided the Minister is satisfied that the Algonquin Forestry Authority has demonstrated the need for the aggregate, environmental impacts are minimized, and the pits would be rehabilitated in a timely manner.

Additionally, the proposed management plan amendment would provide direction that no new aggregate pits would be developed within the Area of Concern around self-sustaining brook trout lakes (currently 500m) without written approval by the superintendent of Algonquin Park, and would ensure that the minimum amount of aggregate would be used during road construction, according to a set of standards that would be prepared.

4.0 Further Information

The following documents are available on the Algonquin Park Planning Projects webpage (http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/algo_planning.html):

- Joint Proposal for Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park and a map of the proposed protection zoning
- Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan

For the Ontario Protected Areas Planning Manual, please see:

http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/planning_manual.html

For the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, please see:

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_06p12_e.htm

For the Algonquin Forestry Authority Act, please see:

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90a17_e.htm

For the Draft Algonquin Forest Management Plan, please see:

<http://www.appefmp.mnr.gov.on.ca/eFMP/home.do?language=en>

For the Algonquin Forestry Authority website, please see:
<http://www.algonquinforestry.on.ca/>

5.0 How to Send Comments

You may submit comments in writing through the Environmental Registry (<http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/>) or to Algonquin Park staff, as follows:

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