



Algonquin Backcountry Recreationalists

Position on Algonquins of Ontario Land Claims Process

Introduction

The ABR's goals are "To preserve, protect and enhance wilderness-like experiences in the backcountry of Algonquin Park". In the matter of the Algonquins of Ontario land claims process currently underway, the ABR has concerns about how the outcome of the claims process may impact recreationalists' wilderness-like experiences in the backcountry of Algonquin Park. Given the uncertainty of how the claims process will develop, the ABR herein presents its concerns and hopes.

The ABR wants to see the elimination of adverse impacts on the park's backcountry's wilderness-like landscapes, sound-scapes and wildlife. The ABR believes that the land claims settlement is an ideal opportunity for an integrated three-party arrangement of protective management and enforced sustainability.

The ABR's Hopes For The Co-operation of Algonquins of Ontario, Algonquin Forestry Authority and Ontario Parks In The Management of Algonquin Park

Protected Zones

The Joint Proposal for Lightening the Ecological Footprint of Logging in Algonquin Park contains recommendations of the Ontario Parks Board and the Algonquin Forestry Authority Board that were developed through consultation with key stakeholders, the forestry industry and the Algonquins of Ontario.

The protected zones within the proposal (including watercourses, setbacks from them, interconnecting portages, and campsites) are the prime focus of the ABR's concerns. The ABR believes that within these protected zones, the Algonquins of Ontario should be subject to the same reservations, fees, and regulations as are recreationalists.

Access Restrictions

The ABR hopes that under the eventual land claim settlement, the Algonquins of Ontario will be required to travel beyond designated backcountry access-points by using the same means as recreationalists .. by foot and by canoe or kayak for the most part, by limited power motorboats only on designated lakes, and by motorized vehicles only on designated public access roads. The ABR envisions the only exception being on designated Algonquins of Ontario access-roads (see below).

Algonquins of Ontario Access-roads and Road-end-facilities

Within the arrangement that the ABR envisions, five Algonquins of Ontario access-roads and road-end facilities would be designated across the park, with a limited number of those being authorized for activity during any one season ... for example: one for summer cultural uses, two for the spring trout season harvest, and three for the fall moose hunt. Being on actual logging roads, their use would be co-ordinated between a designated Algonquins of Ontario Park Authority, the Algonquin Forestry Authority and Ontario Parks.

Just as the AFA rotates its operations from area to area from season to season, the ABR envisions use of these Algonquins of Ontario access-roads and road-end-facilities also being rotated from season to season, and from year to year. And, just as AFA seasonal work-schedule-maps are made public so that

recreationalists can trip-plan according, so would such Algonquins of Ontario utilization-schedule-maps be required to be made public.

Just as the AFA maintains log-storage landings and work-camp sites, the ABR envisions the Algonquins of Ontario being responsible for maintaining a campground facility at each designated road-end, portage(s) to nearby watercourse(s), and an administration-trailer-site at each point where the access-road crosses the park boundary (so as to control access and administer harvest levels). In such an arrangement, just as the AFA is responsible for respecting strict ecological and sustainability standards in its operations, so would the Algonquins of Ontario be held responsible for theirs. Use of non-scheduled and all side-roads would be prohibited and actively enforced.

Such a system of Algonquins of Ontario access control would parallel the system of recreationalists access control. Also, such a system would parallel the controls in place for AFA operations. The ABR believes that an integrated three-party arrangement of protective management and enforced sustainability are crucial to the success of all such systems of access and operation.

By locating the sight and sound of these road-end-facilities' vehicles and intensive activities inland behind shoreline protective zoning setbacks, recreationalists' wilderness-like experiences stand the best chance of being preserved and protected. The proposed road-end-facilities would be connected to actual watercourse access-points by driveway-portage combinations, designed with minimal visibility from the water .. similar to access-points #3 (Magnetawan Lake) and #12 (Pinetree Lake).

Fisheries and Wildlife

Fishing and wildlife viewing are a substantial part of recreationalists' wilderness-like experiences. Accordingly, the ABR doesn't want fish and wildlife levels to be reduced noticeably by Algonquins of Ontario harvesting.

The ABR believes that the sustainability of fish levels would be best served by the Algonquins of Ontario being subject to the same MNR fishing regulations as recreationalists .. the same limits on catches, closed seasons, methods of catching, MNR oversight, review, and enforced sustainability measures. The ABR believes that Algonquins of Ontario access-roads, road-end-facilities and connected driveway-portages would sufficiently facilitate Algonquins of Ontario harvest fishing.

The ABR believes that if any higher fishing limits are granted to Algonquins of Ontario fishers, such limits would be best determined by MNR oversight, review and enforced sustainability measures on a year-by-year and lake-by-lake basis .. thereby maintaining the fisheries part of recreationalists' wilderness-like experience at optimal levels.

The ABR also believes that the sustainability of wildlife levels would be best served by any hunting or trapping conducted by Algonquins of Ontario being subject to MNR oversight, review and enforced sustainability measures .. thereby maintaining the wildlife viewing part of recreationalists' wilderness-like experience at optimal levels.

In closing, it is the ABR's hope that a land claims settlement can be crafted which will recognize the interests of all affected parties .. an arrangement which will care for Algonquin Park through co-operative and integrated management .. dedicated to the sustainability of the park's resources for all future generations.

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