



ONTARIO
PARKS

Algonquin Provincial Park

Backcountry and Educational Program

Algonquin Backcountry Recreationalists (ABR)
February 29, 2008

Overview

- ▶ Backcountry facilities, management and visitation
- ▶ Legislative and policy framework of the Park's backcountry management
- ▶ Backcountry challenges
- ▶ Research needs
- ▶ Leave No Trace
- ▶ Park NHE Program and The Friends
- ▶ Opportunities

Nearby and Natural

Backcountry Facilities

- Approximately 2 000km of canoe routes
- 1 950 campsites
- 3 backpacking trails – Western Uplands, Highland and Eastern Pines
- 3 cross country ski networks – Fen Lake, Minnesing and Leaf Lake
- 2 mountain bike trails – Minnesing and Byers Lake
- 13 Historic Ranger cabins
- Administration of 3 access point offices (Canoe Lake, Lake Opeongo and Sand Lake Gate) and 11 access points by contract

Nearby and Natural

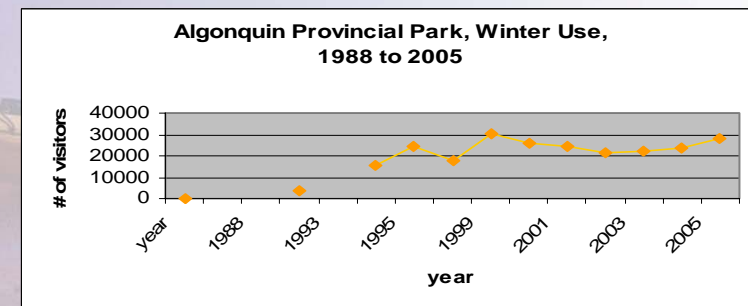
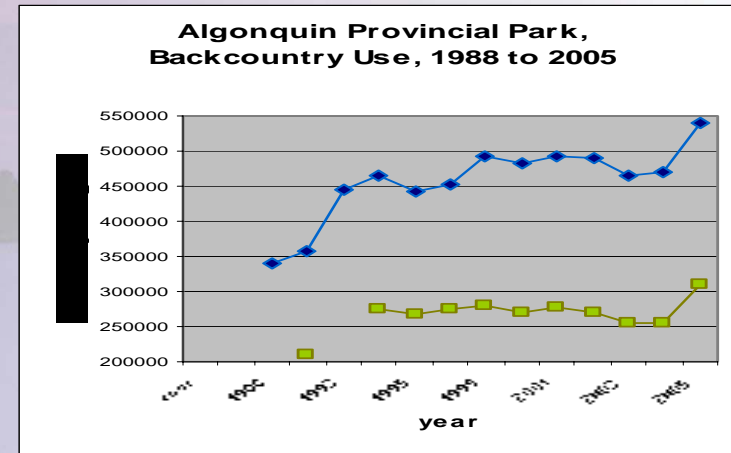
Backcountry Program...

- Forest Management Planning and forest compliance
- Water Management – maintenance and monitoring of dams
- Land administration – work permits - cottage leases, lodges and youth camps
- Maintenance of interior campsites, trails and portages
- Monitoring and enforcing visitor compliance

Nearby and Natural

Backcountry Visitation

Year	Ontario Parks Interior Visitation	Algonquin Interior Camper Nights	Algonquin Winter visits (day use and camping)
1988	340,123		
1989	356,496	211,200	3592
1993	445,685		
1994	464,076	274,921	15,220
1995	443,631	266,817	24,599
1996	452,672	275,218	17,952
1999	492,045	280,916	30,203
2000	482,549	269,510	25,675
2001	492,992	276,837	24,180
2002	489,425	270,986	21,577
2003	466,213	255,783	22,531
2004	469,764	253,898	23,557
2005	539,845	309,717	27,834



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Backcountry Management

- **Backcountry Operations South**
 - Based out of PHQ at East Gate Complex
 - Supervisor and 2 Group Leaders (GLs) – 1 GL responsible for access point office administration and enforcement; 1GL responsible for backcountry maintenance and enforcement
 - 3 Assistant Group Leaders (AGLs)
 - 3 Management Areas (Whitney East, Whitney West and Magnetawan)

Nearby and Natural



Backcountry Management ...

▶ **Magnetawan MA – 1 Ranger Crew**

- Under contract – Magnetawan-Ralph Bice-Rosebary-Misty-Timberwolf-Rain Lakes
- Rain Lake Ranger Cabin

▶ **Whitney West MA– 2 Ranger Crews**

- 1) Canoe Lake North – Burnt Island, Big Trout, La Muir and Hogan Lakes
- 2) Smoke Lake South – Ragged-B. Porcupine-Louisa-Harry-Rence-Welcome Lakes
- Western Uplands and Highland Backpacking trail maintenance – 1 AGL, recreation specialist and summer students – some volunteer support

▶ **Whitney East MA– 2 Ranger Crews**

- 1) Opeongo North – Happy Isle-Merchant-Redrock-Proulx-Little and Big Crow Lakes (Big Crow Lake Ranger Cabin)
- 2) Lavieille-Dickson-Booth-Shirley-McKaskill Lakes and Rock-Pen-Clydegale Lakes
- Tattler Lake, Kitty Lake and McKaskill Lake Ranger Cabins

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Backcountry Management...

▶ Backcountry Operations North

- Supervisor and 3 GLs
 - Home base – Pembroke District Office and satellite office at Samuel de Champlain PP
- ▶ **Kiosk MA**– 1 GL and 1 AGL; 3 PWs; Ontario Ranger Camp with 22 ORs; Campground – under contract
- North Tea-Manitou-Kioshkokiwi-Three Mile-Maple-Erables-Cauchon Lakes
- ▶ **Brent MA**– 1 GL; 1 PW and 2 students; Campground – under contract
- Petawawa R.- Burntroot-Catfish-Cedar-Radiant Lakes
- ▶ **Achray MA** – 1GL and 1 AGL; 2 PWs and 2 CRs (Achray Campground; Eastern Pines backpacking trail)
- White Partridge-Petawawa R.-Travers-McManus-Grand-Stratton-Sec-Basin Lakes

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Legislation, Policy and Environmental Assessment



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- Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act (2006)
- Crown Forest Sustainability Act and Algonquin Forestry Authority Act (RU Zone)
- Park Management Plan
- Ontario Parks Planning and Management Policies
- Class EA for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves
- Algonquin Hunting Agreement (1991)
- Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Many others

Nearby and Natural

Backcountry Challenges



- ▶ Size of the Park
- ▶ Road Access – impact on park values
- ▶ Extreme weather events
- ▶ Budget capacity
- ▶ Human behaviour – attitudes and perceptions of the backcountry and wilderness
- ▶ Continuous improvement - adopting Best Management Practices

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Research Needs

- Noise impacts on natural soundscapes
- Air quality monitoring
- Backcountry restoration of areas impacted by visitor use
- Determine whether angler harvest affects natural lake and brook trout populations
- Developing techniques for minimizing bear/human conflicts

Nearby and Natural

Leave No Trace

- ▶ Quetico, Temagami and Algonquin – see this as a model
- ▶ Provides consistent message on backcountry principles
 - Plan ahead and prepare
 - Travel/camp on durable surfaces
 - Dispose of waste properly
 - Leave what you find
 - Minimize campfire impacts
 - Respect wildlife
 - Be considerate of other visitors
- ▶ Taking it forward to Ontario Parks



Nearby and Natural

Park NHE Program

- ▶ Natural Heritage Education Program - provides opportunities for park visitors to learn about Algonquin's natural and cultural heritage
- ▶ Visitor Centre, Logging Museum, interpretive trails, programs
- ▶ Publications – Ontario Parks & Friends of Algonquin
 - ▶ Canoe Routes map, tabloid, canoe programs, website

Nearby and Natural

The Friends of Algonquin



- ▶ Not-for-profit co-operating association founded in 1983
- ▶ Mandate: Enhance the interpretive and educational programs in Algonquin Park
- ▶ Legal agreement with Ontario Parks
- ▶ Money raised through bookstore sales (publications), fundraising, grants, etc
- ▶ FOA run the bookstores, fund special projects like Visitor Centre exhibits, new publications, etc.



Nearby and Natural

Opportunities

- ▶ Volunteer projects
- ▶ Awareness of backcountry etiquette
- ▶ Input into publication themes and articles
- ▶ Fundraising – grants for park projects
- ▶ Information sharing

Nearby and Natural