



END LOGGING IN ONTARIO AND MANITOBA PARKS

PROTECT ALGONQUIN AND DUCK MOUNTAIN PROVINCIAL PARKS

PROTECTED AREAS SHOULD BE PROTECTED – NOT LOGGED



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Imagine paddling down a serene river, watching birds flitting through the forested shoreline and rounding a bend to find a moose feeding at the water's edge. Or picture a journey to a cool lake, finding a peaceful place to pass an afternoon while trying to hook an elusive trout.

Provincial parks provide these experiences, and many more. Our parks are meant to give us opportunities to be absorbed in wilderness, and to wonder at thriving natural ecosystems.



Photo: Canoeing in Algonquin Park (Christopher Porter).

Algonquin Provincial Park is Ontario's oldest park, first designated in 1893, and one of the largest at 7,630 square kilometres.¹ Endangered species like wood turtles and eastern wolves call this park home, along

with pine martens and moose. Bald eagles and ospreys nest here, and whip-poor-wills can be heard singing their namesake song in the dawn and dusk. Over 2,100 kilometres of canoe routes provide a major draw for folks seeking outdoor adventures.

Duck Mountain Provincial Park in Manitoba encompasses a portion of the Manitoba Escarpment, which rises out of the prairie and boasts the province's highest point at 831 metres above sea level. In Duck Mountain, 1,424 square kilometres of evergreen-dominated boreal forest meet the aspen parkland, where moose, elk and grey wolves roam – along with extremely elusive cougars. The lakes in the park provide great opportunities for trout fishing, and

spring-fed East Blue Lake is one of the clearest lakes in Manitoba.²

Though they exist in different provinces, these popular provincial parks have many similarities. Both parks are comprised of mixed wood forests covering ancient glacial deposits, and contain unique landforms interspersed

with cool pothole lakes that feed clear flowing streams.

But all is not right in these two parks – there's no peace in the trees.

These parks share the dubious distinction of being the two Canadian parks with long-term logging operations continuing inside their boundaries. Wood

products company Louisiana-Pacific holds a lease to log the public forest in Duck Mountain³, while the Ontario government is responsible for logging Algonquin through the Algonquin Forestry Authority, a crown agency⁴.

The idea of industrial activity in a park may not have raised any alarm bells in the past, but times have changed. The federal government removed industrial activity from national parks in 1930.⁵ The Manitoba government banned logging in all parks except Duck Mountain in 2009.⁶ Outside of Algonquin, logging in the rest of Ontario's parks ended in 1995, and was officially prohibited by law

when the new *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act* was passed in 2006.⁷

Shockingly, today 61 per cent of Duck Mountain Park and 65 per cent of Algonquin Park are available for forestry activity.

This type of industrial activity does not meet the general public's expectation

of park protection, nor the very definition of a protected area. That's why logging was removed from the vast majority of parks. Furthermore, science has shown that the complex balance of life in a natural wild forest cannot easily be managed. Logging puts these supposedly "protected" ecosystems at risk.

Read the rest of this report to learn about logging activity in our provincial parks, and find out what you can do to end this outdated and harmful practice.



Photo top: Oxtongue River, Algonquin Provincial Park (Robert McCaw), above: Duck Mountain Provincial Park wetlands (Mike Grandmaison).

ALGONQUIN PROVINCIAL PARK ... OR ALGONQUIN TREE FARM?

If you talk about wilderness and parks with an Ontarian, Algonquin Provincial Park will quickly come up. Each year, almost a million people make the journey up to Algonquin, where the southern deciduous forests meet the northern coniferous trees. Native trout hatcheries in pristine spring-fed streams and lakes are an incredible attraction for avid fisherfolk. Algonquin Park, with its immense forested area, offers a home for wildlife that is unequalled in southern Ontario. Whether camping, backcountry canoeing, hiking, fishing or just driving through looking for animals, this park is as close to “wild” as most people will ever experience.

When the park was designated in 1893, logging was entrenched as a historical part of Algonquin. Before this time, all the old-growth eastern

white pines of the area had already been logged; 500-year-old giants were felled and shipped off to build the Royal Navy overseas. Logging was once a primary source of employment in the Algonquin region. However, today's mechanized logging industry employs just a fraction of the people it once did, and provides jobs for only a small percentage of the workers in the surrounding townships.

Even before the establishment of Algonquin Provincial Park, Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald saw the concerning level of logging going on in Ontario's Ottawa River Valley. In 1871, he wrote:

“We are recklessly destroying the timber of Canada, and there is scarcely a possibility of replacing it.”⁸

Since the 1960s, logging in Algonquin Park has been controversial. In an era of growing recreational pursuit, when we were beginning to understand more about the natural world, logging in Algonquin Park touched a nerve as a destructive

process. In 1974, the Ontario government quieted the clash between citizens and loggers by removing logging companies' long-term contracts from the park, and replacing them with a government agency called the Algonquin Forestry Authority (AFA).⁹ The AFA has logged the park on behalf of these companies ever since.

In 2005, the Ontario government acknowledged the damage being done to Algonquin, and called on the AFA and Ontario Parks to “lighten the footprint” of logging on the park. After a lengthy review process, the resulting report provided little improvement. The amount of trees being logged in the park didn't even decrease, and new regulations intended to protect riparian areas are only applied in areas where the trees are less valuable.¹⁰ The Ontario Parks Board's recommendation to double the amount of area



Photo: Sunrise on Lake of Two Rivers, Algonquin Provincial Park (Robert McCaw).

protected from logging in Algonquin was not heeded. In 2014, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario's Annual Report called for an end to logging in Algonquin. The Commissioner stated that local mills could source enough wood from outside the park instead of continuing to fragment the park¹¹, but the AFA has been quick to shoot down this option¹². Even though it is a crown agency, the AFA works hand in hand with the logging lobby group in Ontario, promoting logging in Algonquin Park and fighting against the wishes of Ontarians.

Today, thousands of kilometres of logging roads fragment Algonquin's forests, with more being added every year. The logging going on in Algonquin Park may be less ecologically damaging than the devastating clearcutting happening outside the park, but **it is still an assault on the healthy, functioning ecosystems of a natural forest.**

“The MNR [Ministry of Natural Resources] should bring the management of the province's flagship park into alignment with the important role of provincial parks today and afford Algonquin Park the same level of protection as the rest of Ontario's protected areas.”

– Gord Miller, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario (2014)¹³

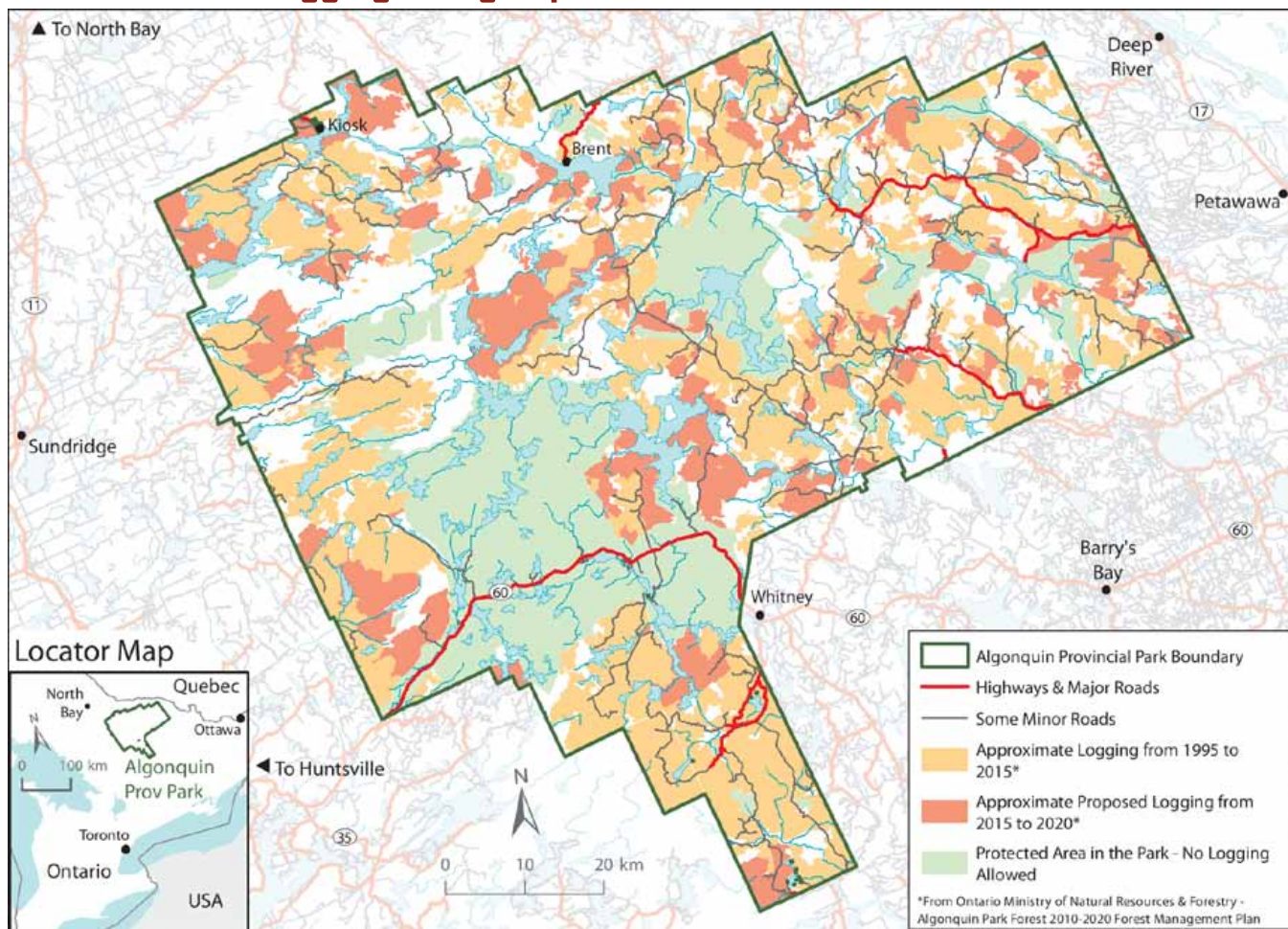
protected from logging in Algonquin was not heeded.

In 2014, the Environmental Commissioner



Photo: Wolves in Algonquin Park (Art Wolfe).

Past & Future Logging in Algonquin Provincial Park



“If I had to choose one indicator to assess and compare the integrity of wildlands, it would be road density, as roads make most other human disturbances possible and have cumulative effects that persist as long as the road is in place.”

– noted ecologist Reed F. Noss (1995)¹⁴

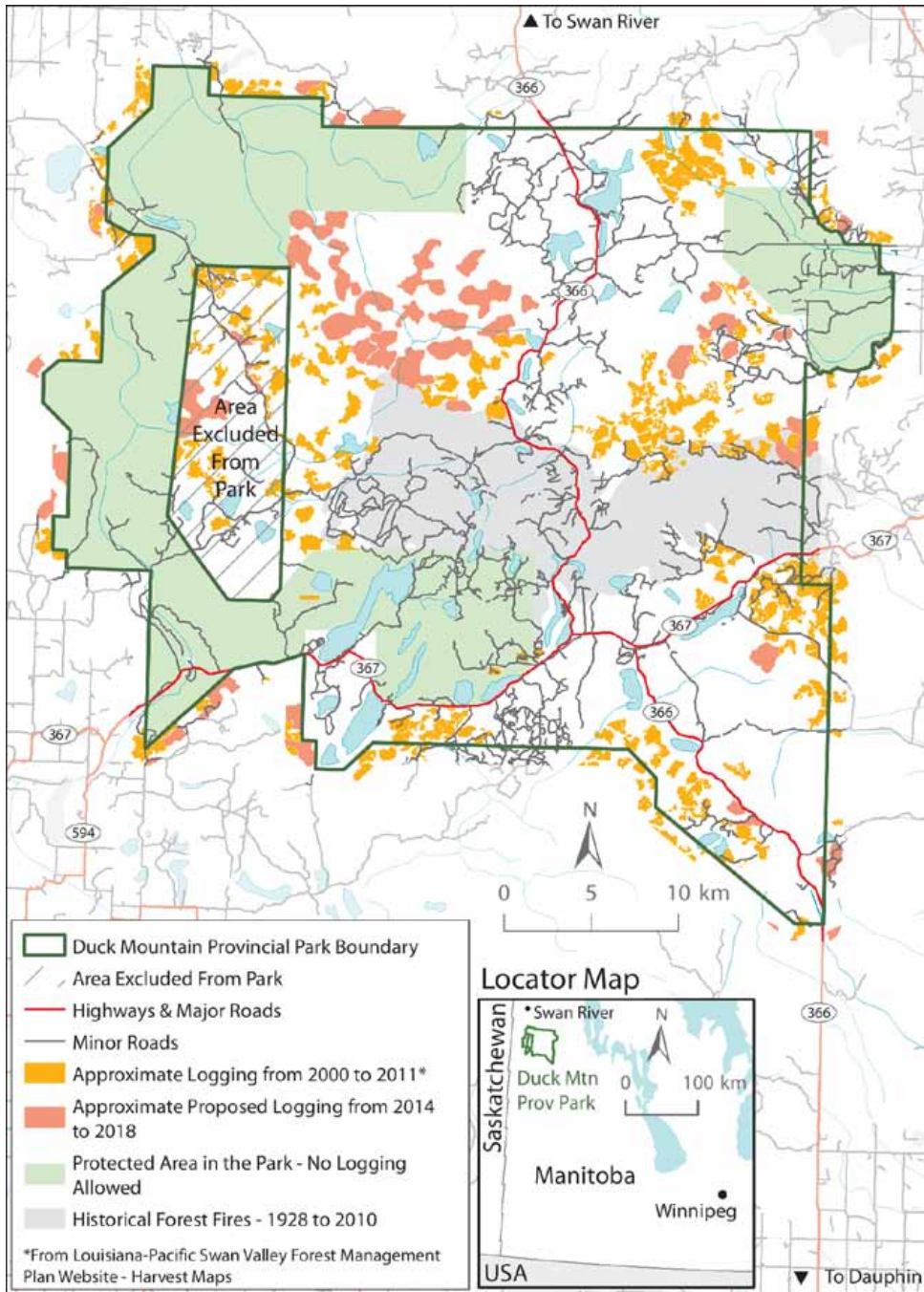


Photos above: Young great grey owls (Gordon Court) Pine marten (Eric Reeder), Eastern white pine forest (Nicholas Tonelli).

ALGONQUIN PARK LOGGING: A HISTORY

- 1893** Algonquin Provincial Park established
- 1930** Logging banned in Canada's national parks
- 1988** New park policy prohibits logging in 80% of Ontario's park system
- 1995** Logging ends in Ontario provincial parks (except Algonquin)
- 2005** Government commissions report on “lightening the footprint” of logging in Algonquin
- 2006** *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act* passes, officially prohibiting logging in Ontario parks (except Algonquin)
- 2014** Ontario Environment Commissioner calls for logging ban in Algonquin Provincial Park

Past & Future Logging in Duck Mountain Provincial Park



Photos: Grey jay (Robert McCaw), Wood lilies (Mike Grandmaison), Northern leopard frog (Robert McCaw).

DUCK MOUNTAIN PARK LOGGING: A HISTORY

- 1961** Duck Mountain Provincial Park established
- 1993** Manitoba Clean Environment Commission recommends phasing out commercial logging in parks
- 1994** Louisiana-Pacific (LP) applies for forest licence encompassing Duck Mountain Park
- 2009** Logging banned in Manitoba parks (except Duck Mountain)
- 2010** Declining moose numbers in Duck Mountain cause concern
- 2013** LP forest licence quietly extended until 2019



Photo left: Clearcut in Duck Mountain Provincial Park, right: Logs stacked in the park (Eric Reder).

DUCK MOUNTAIN PROVINCIAL PARK: INDUSTRIALIZED WILDERNESS

As you drive west off the plains of Manitoba, Duck Mountain Provincial Park rises up before you – a forested wilderness breaking free from the agricultural development surrounding it. Trembling aspen and stands of paper birch in the well-drained hills lead into pockets of black spruce and tamarack lowlands, giving way to white spruce and jack pine in the north portion of Duck Mountain.

Manitoba's *Provincial Parks Act* was created in 1961, and Duck Mountain was one of the four original parks designated in the province. The large old-growth trees that once grew here were logged even before the Duck Mountain area became part of the Crown forest reserves in 1906.¹⁵ More recent logging was done by small "quota holders" who held licences and operated mills in this area until the 1990s.

In 1993, after being asked to review logging in Nopiming Provincial Park, the Clean Environment Commission (CEC) – the Manitoba government's arm's-length advisory panel – released a succinct recommendation:

"Commercial forestry activity in all provincial parks should be phased out."

– Manitoba Clean Environment Commission recommendation, 1993¹⁶

"Commercial forestry activity in all provincial parks should be phased out." The government of the day dismissed this advice, and instead brought a big US-owned company, Louisiana-Pacific, into the province.

Louisiana-Pacific (LP) applied for a logging tenure in 1994, seeking rights over a huge swath of public forest that included Duck Mountain Provincial Park.¹⁷ Even before a logging licence was secured, LP was permitted to build a plant that produces pressed panels (known as OSB) using hardwood log chips such as those coming from Duck Mountain's aspen forest.

At the time, Louisiana-Pacific had a questionable record: the company had received the biggest environmental fine ever handed down in the US (due to its air pollution violations)¹⁸, and was not particularly welcome in Manitoba. The uproar from their application forced the government to open up public hearings through the Clean Environment Commission, and people lined up to speak out against the project.

Participants raised major concerns about the amount of wood to

be extracted, as well as the impact LP's logging would have on wildlife populations like moose. Despite public opposition, the Manitoba government approved the new logging area tenure, and LP took control of Duck Mountain Provincial Park forests.

The government has justified logging activity by suggesting that it's needed for parks to survive, or claiming that logging mimics forest fires (it doesn't – fire *chemically* transforms the nutrients in a forest, while logging *physically* removes those nutrients). For years, the Wilderness Committee called out the provincial government on these myths and kept Canadians informed about the ongoing shame of clearcutting provincial parks.

Finally in 2008, the Manitoba government announced an end to logging in all provincial parks... except Duck Mountain.¹⁹

The rationale for maintaining logging in Duck Mountain was that LP's mill still needed the wood supply to operate – it was private profit over public good.

Catastrophic moose declines in the region made headlines in 2010 and 2011, when it was reported the moose population in the Duck Mountain area had plunged by 90 per cent.²⁰ The decline

coincides with the time period LP has been logging in Duck Mountain – it appeared that the concerns raised in earlier public hearings were proving to be true. Logging roads allow easier access for predators like wolves, and this is considered to be one of the biggest problems for moose.

Concerns brought up during public consultation about the amount of wood to be cut also proved true, when it was discovered the government had greatly overestimated the available timber in the area.²¹ In 2012 and 2013, as the contentious LP environmental licence for forest management was set to expire, the government of Manitoba quietly extended the company's licences until 2019, with absolutely no public hearings or reviews. **Today, destructive clearcut logging continues in Duck Mountain.**



Photo: Bull moose (Robert McCaw).

TIME TO END THE LIES: ACCEPTING THE TRUTH ON PARK LOGGING

Industrial logging is not a benign activity. It's devastating to natural ecosystems. Scientific studies – and basic logic – indicate that logging brings long-term harm to wilderness. The damage can be seen in nutrient deficiency in soils, reduced diversity in trees, decreased wildlife populations and poorer water quality. And that's without taking into account the impact of roads built to facilitate logging. **To consider industrial logging in a natural ecosystem anything but a destructive commercial process is wilful blindness.**

A FAMILIAR PROBLEM

Logging puts similar pressure on communities right across Canada. Most of the mills operating today were built decades ago, before there was a widespread understanding of the forest's true value and ecological necessity. Decisions about mills, and the volume of wood they needed, were based upon the maximum amount of timber that could be extracted from the forest. The result is simple to understand, and painful to fix – there are already too many mills for the amount of forest we can log. **Scaling down the amount of forest being logged will come at a cost, but it is essential in order to maintain the environmental benefits that forests provide for us.**



Photo left: Tamarack trees in Duck Mountain Park (Eric Reder), right: Sunset in Duck Mountain Park (Mike Grandmaison).

TAKE ACTION!

LOGGING IN PROVINCIAL PARKS IS WRONG

All parks should be protected reserves of natural, unhindered, functioning ecosystems.

The respected voices of the Clean Environment Commission in Manitoba and the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario have stated that logging in parks must stop.

Please write to the Premiers of Ontario and Manitoba and urge them to end logging in Algonquin and Duck Mountain Provincial Parks.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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 ✉ premier@leg.gov.mb.ca

WildernessCommittee.org/Manitoba • 1-800-661-WILD (9453)

YES!

I WANT TO END LOGGING IN PROVINCIAL PARKS

Enclosed is: \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____
 Fed. reg. charity #11929-3009-RR0001

I want to become a member! Enclosed is my annual fee for a:
 \$59 Family Membership \$35 Individual Membership

NAME _____ PHONE _____
 ADDRESS _____ CITY _____
 PROVINCE _____ POSTAL CODE _____ EMAIL Yes, send me updates via email.

The Wilderness Committee is Canada's largest membership-based wilderness preservation organization.



Photo left: Hiking in Duck Mountain Provincial Park, right: Duck Mountain Park logging road (Eric Reder).

WHY WE MUST END LOGGING IN PARKS RIGHT NOW

Parks are established around the world to preserve functioning ecosystems. They are also established to provide people with solace and a chance to reconnect with nature. Even if people don't visit a protected area, Canadians want to know that wilderness is protected. Algonquin and Duck Mountain Provincial Parks both possess an outstanding and rich wild heritage, which is why they were designated as parks. Sadly, these parks are not protected.

The longer we wait, the more damage our parks will endure, and the longer it will take for the forest ecosystems to recover. No matter when park logging bans for

Algonquin and Duck Mountain are finally introduced, the logging companies are going to cry foul and hold people's jobs up as ransom to prolong their continued profiteering. But until park logging is completely banned, natural forest ecosystems will continue to be harmed. **We must ask our governments to set the date when logging in Algonquin Provincial Park and Duck Mountain Provincial Park will end.**

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Photo: Clearcut in Duck Mountain Provincial Park (Eric Reder).

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