

ALGONQUIN ECO WATCH ANNUAL UPDATE – 2009

Algonquin Eco Watch is producing a book entitled “Algonquin Park: The Human Impact”. The purpose of this book is to compile a series of “State-of-the-Park” chapters concerning major activities underway in Algonquin Park and its ecosystems, as well as measurements of some of the key environmental parameters that will allow future managers to understand how these parameters change over time. We sought out people who know the Park well and who have expertise in the subjects that they study and consider. We asked them to prepare the best summary they could about the Park and what may happen in the future with respect to that part of the Park and its surroundings. We hope that the book will represent a “State of the Park and its Ecosystems in 2009” and serve as a benchmark that all present and future Algonquin Park managers and users will find useful and enjoyable. We expect to have the book completed by early September. The overleaf photo depicts several of the pristine headwater lakes so representative of the Algonquin Ecosystem. Over 250 Algonquin Park lakes of this type support self-sustaining brook trout populations – one of the highest concentrations in the world. Many negative factors such as invasive species, over-fishing, improper forest management and water pollution can adversely affect these precious fish populations. Protection of these lakes for future generations is of paramount importance to Algonquin Eco Watch and is only one of the many issues discussed in detail in our book. Copies of the book will be available from OJGraphix in Espanola, Ontario via www.ojgraphix.com/ecowatch.

In an ongoing effort to initiate progress toward a cleanup of the decommissioned CN railway line through northern Algonquin Park, Algonquin Eco Watch (AEW) submitted a second Shareholders Resolution in late 2008. This resolution requested that CN share the results of environmental studies conducted to date. Subsequent communication with CN personnel however suggested that greater progress

could be achieved through increased dialogue and so we withdrew our resolution. Since then dialogue has indeed increased and hopefully is leading toward a better understanding and greater cooperation between our two parties.

Algonquin Eco Watch will be conducting a study with Dr. Glenn Parker of Laurentian University to determine whether or not the ingestion of slag from the Sudbury Basin might be harmful to grit-eating birds. The hypothesis is that as birds grind such foods as seeds in their crop (gizzard), to aid in digestion the rock particles used for breaking down the seeds – in this case slag – themselves break down. We are concerned that assimilation of heavy metals from the slag may have detrimental effects upon grit-eating birds. The study is expected to commence this fall and last about a year. The results will be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

As a member of the Local Citizens Committee (LCC) Algonquin Eco Watch is participating in the development of the 2010-2020 Algonquin Park Forest Management Plan. We feel that unless wildfire controls were to be discontinued, a highly unlikely development, good forest management together with prescribed burning where feasible, is the best way to maintain sustainable diversity throughout the Algonquin Ecosystem. While we generally support the efforts of the Algonquin Forestry Authority and Ontario Parks in this regard, AEW has initiated a process called “Issue Resolution” in an effort to resolve some issues relating to computer modeling and the provision of old growth that could not be dealt with satisfactorily at the committee level.

Following is a summary of work completed to date on the Algonquin Park Septic Re-inspection Program, which was recently received from Mr. Chris Gerrits of Gerrits Drilling and Engineering Ltd. This survey was initiated by a partnership consisting of Ontario Parks, the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority, the

Algonquin Park Ratepayers Association, the Haliburton County Health Unit and Algonquin Eco Watch and is being conducted by Gerrits Drilling and Engineering Ltd. This survey will help to ensure that Algonquin Park waters retain their pristine qualities:

“The response to our initial spring mail-out was fantastic. The team received 207 out of the 275 survey questionnaires returned. We managed to complete a total of 190 septic re-inspections within Algonquin Park this (2008) season. Our field crew has completed most of the northern lakes in the program including: Cauchon Lake, Little Cauchon Lake, Rain Lake, Manitou and North Tea Lakes. They have also completed many properties on Cedar Lake, Canoe Lake, Cache Lake, Source Lake and Smoke Lake. The program seems to have been very well received by the majority of leaseholders. The focus this year (2009) will be on getting more of the remaining (approximately) 68 mail-out surveys returned and the outstanding leases inspected.”

After several years of negotiating with Regional staff, on March 18th, 2009, we received a copy of a much appreciated memo from Mr. Ray Bonenberg, Regional Director, Southern Region, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, to staff in Districts surrounding Algonquin Park, outlining the significance of 9 sub-watersheds sourcing outside Algonquin Park but flowing into it. Mr. Bonenberg requested field staff to be especially vigilant when considering development projects along these waterways, if they could negatively affect Algonquin Park waters.

Membership in Algonquin Eco Watch may be obtained or renewed by forwarding a cheque for \$15.00. You will receive a tax-deductible receipt.
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Websites: www.algonquin-eco-watch.com and www.arctic-waters-threatened.com

An aerial photograph of a lush green forest. In the center, there is a large, irregularly shaped pond with dark blue water. To the left and top, there are smaller ponds and a narrow channel of water. The forest is dense and vibrant green. The text "Algonquin is..." is overlaid in the center in a white, italicized font with a blue outline.

Algonquin is...