

# The Algonquin Eco Watcher



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## PROTECTION OF LAKE TROUT SPAWN:



*Lake trout often spawn with their dorsal fins out of the water.*

Since lake trout generally spawn in very shallow water, it is critical that no water drawdown take place during the incubation/early fry stage, as this may result in egg/fry losses due to desiccation or freezing.

During the winter-spring period of 1998-99 ice cracking and dropping was observed on Smoke Lake, indicating that water drawdown had occurred under the ice. In response to a request from Algonquin Eco Watch, Algonquin Park staff arranged a meeting on June 16, 1999, attended by AEW, Park staff and members of the Engineering Services (responsible for water control) staff of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

We learned that normally the lake trout waters controlled by dams are drawn down during the period mid-September to mid-October to the minimum levels below which they will not be reduced during the winter period. This procedure is intended to protect lake trout spawn and is probably adequate provided that no further drawdown takes place prior to the newly hatched fry reaching the swim-up fry stage; usually in mid-May, or when the water surface temperature reaches 10 degrees C. Since the South Tea Lake dam controls a fairly large basin (including Smoke, South Tea and Canoe Lakes) however, it is usually felt necessary to draw the water down additionally just prior to the expected spring freshet. It is during this secondary drawdown that egg loss is likely to occur, since this is

lower than the level established just prior to spawning. Owing to the size of this basin, plus the fact that it feeds the Muskoka River system through Lake of Bays and Lake Muskoka, to forego that secondary drawdown could jeopardize the orderly removal of spring run-off through the system. As a result of this meeting however, Algonquin Park staff will endeavour to minimize the pre-freshet drawdown to more closely coincide with the levels reached the previous fall; thereby minimizing the likelihood of lake trout egg loss.

## GRAPHITE MINE:

The adjacent photo shows the partially water-filled open pit (upper left) graphite mine which is located at the headwaters of the Tim and Magnetawan Rivers; immediately west of the Algonquin Park boundary. Minnow (upper right) and McGuire (lower left) Lakes are headwater lakes that flow into Graphite Lake (lower right), which is itself a headwater lake. The refinery may be seen adjacent to the south shore of Graphite Lake. On April 29, 1999, Algonquin Eco Watch met with the new mine owner and learned that the mining operation will be re-activated and expanded, probably commencing in the year 2000. We will be following developments in this regard with great interest.

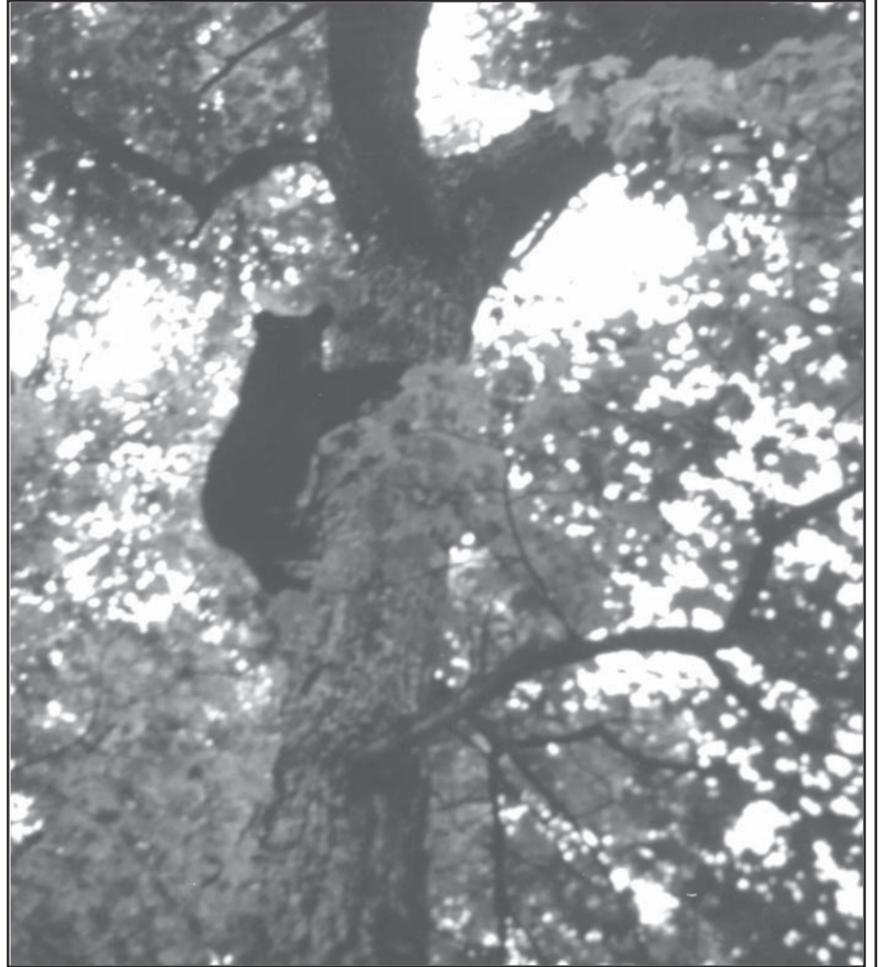


*Graphite Lake area showing Open Pit Mine and adjacent headwater lakes.*

## BLACK BEAR STUDY

Owing to continuing monetary constraints, Algonquin Eco Watch was unable to hire a field technician for the full 1999 Algonquin Black Bear Study field season. Fortunately for all concerned, the formation of "The Algonquin Research Cooperative" has provided a very workable solution to this problem. Jeremy Inglis was successful in obtaining a contract for the 1999 field season with the Cooperative which is "a collaborative research body dedicated to improving the scientific understanding of the Greater Algonquin Ecosystem". By contributing \$3,000.00 toward the program budget of the Cooperative, Algonquin Eco Watch received a guarantee that 20% (1 day per week) of Jeremy's time would be dedicated to the Algonquin Black Bear Study. This, in conjunction with aerial telemetry flights provided by Algonquin Eco Watch should allow us to continue the bear study at an acceptable level of data gathering. A recent telemetry flight, indicated that 3 of our 4 radio collared bears had exited the Park to their habitual summer range by June 18th. This is unusual in that large males customarily remain in their Algonquin Park breeding ranges until mid-July, and implies that the breeding season may have ended early in 1999. This coincides with a similar early exit in 1997 and is interesting since both these years followed years of abundant berry and nut crops, which may have ensured successful cub production. Since female black bears will not breed if they have milking cubs with them, and since 1999 may be a year of abundant cub production, it may be that a majority

of sows were not receptive to breeding this year; thus causing dominant males to abandon the breeding season early in 1999. We are unsure as to what the early exit of adult males from the Park implies, but will be closely following their movements during this field season, in hopes of learning still more regarding the activities of large adult Algonquin male bears.



## PROPOSED ACCESS ROAD INTO ALGONQUIN PARK FROM HALIBURTON

On May 26, 1999, Algonquin Eco Watch met with a representative of an Ad Hoc committee from the Haliburton area; comprised of members of the Haliburton Highlands Outdoor Association, the Haliburton Chamber of Commerce and local citizens interested in promoting the Haliburton area from a tourism standpoint. This group is interested in developing access/day-use and camping opportunities in Algonquin Park that would be easily accessible directly from Haliburton. Their original plan to access the Highway 60 corridor via a road through Clyde and Bruton Townships, utilizing the Hydro corridor plus logging roads in the Lake Louisa area, had to be abandoned due to prohibitive costs. The group is now formulating a plan that would access the Galipos Lakes area, in Eyre Township and would tentatively include the building of an access road to one or more group campsites, with the possibility of individual campsites being developed on the various surrounding lakes. Algonquin Eco Watch explained that we would be opposed to such a development, based on the significance of the Galipos Lakes as fragile headwaters, and the potential or actual presence of self-sustaining brook trout populations. We will endeavour to maintain constructive communications with the Haliburton group.

## FOREST MANAGEMENT:



On June 4, 1999, Algonquin Eco Watch made a presentation to the joint Planning/Local Citizens Committee, which is presently reviewing the Algonquin Forest Management Plan, in an effort to promote the concept of horse skidding in special circumstances, within Algonquin Park. Such difficult situations as riparian (low/wet) areas, thinning operations, and areas of successful hemlock regeneration/recruitment are all felt to be sufficiently fragile as to warrant the special capabilities of horse skidding in combination with mechanical forwarding, in order to minimize damage. In a letter of June 16, 1999, to Algonquin Eco Watch, the Park Superintendent stated that "the Local Citizens Committee and the Planning Team deliberated on the matter of horse logging and have decided not to reintroduce it to Algonquin at this point in time. The decision is based on the consensus that machinery be allowed to continue to extract Park wood (provided site impacts are kept under control) unless it can be shown that there are instances where the use of machines are simply not appropriate".

While Algonquin Eco Watch accepts this decision, we will continue to gather data regarding horse skidding for possible future application.

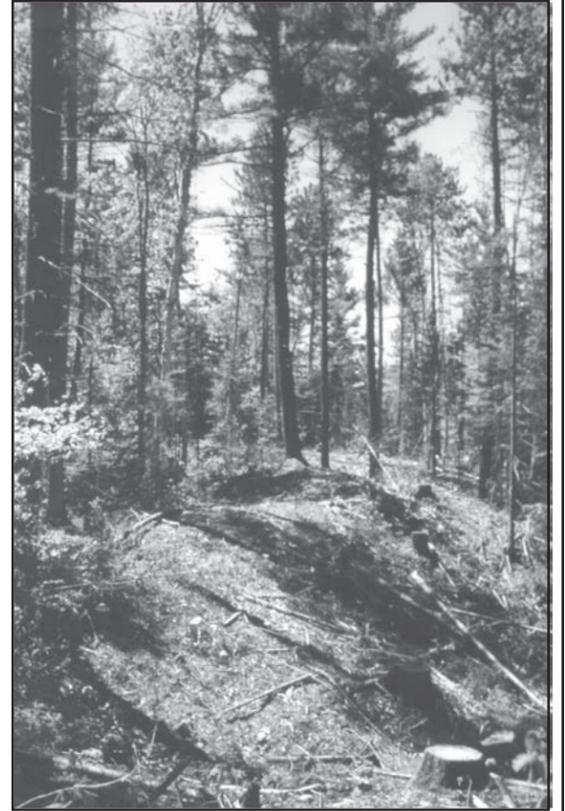
*Horse skidding not considered appropriate for Algonquin by Managers*

## VISIT TO 2 LOGGING OPERATIONS (THIRD PARTY PARTICIPATION):

In response to a request from Algonquin Eco Watch to the joint Local Citizens/Planning Committees, the following was received from the Algonquin Park Superintendent in a letter dated February 27, 1999:

“The Algonquin Forestry Authority is always receptive to the inspection of its operations by the public. Such scrutiny, whether in the form of independent forest audits or field tours, results in positive exchange of ideas. We welcome the involvement of Algonquin Eco Watch in a review of operations and suggest that you contact either the AFA or MNR so that an appropriate site(s) can be randomly picked based on the Annual Work Schedule. We can then jointly go out and review progress on the ground with a view to resolving any issues in the field.”

On May 27, 1999, Algonquin Eco Watch accompanied AFA and MNR staff members to 2 logging operations in the Liz Lake/Lake Traverse areas of Algonquin Park. The adjacent photo illustrates a pine shelterwood cut in the Liz Lake area, where adequate shelter for wildlife species has been left, while at the same time openings created in the forest canopy will stimulate regeneration of new growth. Algonquin Eco Watch anticipates making as many as 6 such joint field inspections with the AFA and MNR per year. Inspection reports



*1998-99 Pine Shelterwood Cut in Algonquin Park.*

## VISIT TO QUARRY, PAPINEAU TOWNSHIP

On June 9, 1999, Algonquin Eco Watch met with the owner/developer of a garnet deposit in Papineau Township, north of Algonquin Park in the Mattawa area. Our concerns regarding the development of this quarry stem from the fact that it is located very close to the height-of-land from which surface water will flow south into Algonquin Park, or north into the Mattawa River. While it appears that surface water will indeed flow north from the site, away from the Park, Algonquin Eco Watch was further concerned regarding the effect that repeated blasting might have upon the area ground water flow, which may be altered as a result of fracturing within the adjacent bedrock.

On June 15, 1999, AEW received a letter from W. Michael Lucko, Geologist, of the firm WML Geological Consulting, which stated in part the following regarding the Papineau Township property:

“Diamond drilling has indicated that there is no (natural) fracturing in the rock and therefore no water will be transported through the rock. I have worked many years in the mining industry in geology and rock mechanics and can say with certainty that drilling and blasting will not fracture the rock at a distance of 4 to 5 metres away from the blast and will therefore have no effect on the water flow. In conclusion, all surface and ground water flows in a northerly direction, away from Algonquin Park and that mining will have no effect whatsoever on water and groundwater flow”.

As a result of these communications, Algonquin Eco Watch feels that there will be no threat to the Algonquin Ecosystem from this quarry operation. We will however continue to monitor activities at this site.

## ALGONQUIN MOOSE HUNT:



On May 25, 1999, Algonquin Eco Watch met with representatives of the Golden Lake First Nation (henceforth to be known as the “Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation”) to discuss ways in which our two groups may cooperatively interact for the ultimate benefit of the Algonquin Ecosystem. First Nations peoples involved in land claims that include the Algonquin Ecosystem have recently elected a joint negotiating group to be known as the “Algonquin Nation Negotiations Interim Directorate”. Algonquin Eco Watch has requested an opportunity to address this group to present a summary of our philosophy and to outline issues of concern to us. Such issues as the Algonquin Moose Hunt, vehicle access and winter fishing, in addition to the possibility of Algonquin Eco Watch’s desire to establish a program to assist First Nation members and others of Algonquin descent, to further their education in the field of resource management, could all be discussed at that time.

One recent development of relevance relating to the Algonquin moose hunt should be explained here. In the 1989 Algonquin Master Plan Review, it was stated by the Minister of Natural Resources that “I agree with the Parks Council to phase out hunt camps in Clyde and Bruton Townships in twenty-one years, effective from January 1, 1989 (year 2010), without compensation”. In the most recent (1998) Master Plan Review, the following appears on page 11; “.... Temporary hunt

camp sites .... in Clyde and Bruton .... and Eyre Townships .... will be permitted to continue as long as hunting is permitted within these areas of the Park.” The fact that a moose hunting phase-out plan no longer appears to exist for these 3 townships, strongly implies that there is no longer an intent to remove the non-native moose hunt from Clyde, Bruton and Eyre Townships. This in turn tends to diminish any argument against moose hunting in Algonquin Park in general, and against the Algonquin Native hunt in particular, and implies that moose hunting, which presently occurs in over 40% of Algonquin Park, will continue or expand in the future.

## PENDING ISSUES:

In addition to the topics already discussed, Algonquin Eco Watch will continually be monitoring the following issues: Brook Trout Nursery Creek Protection; Responsible Decommissioning Of The CNR From Algonquin Park; Removal Of Structures From The Algonquin Observatory Property; Protection Of Headwaters; Leakage Through And Around Water Control Structures (Dams); Development Of Any Kind That May Affect The Algonquin Ecosystem.

## OUR MEMBERS SUGGEST:

Following are some “capsule” statements that we have received from our members regarding issues and suggestions which they feel warrant follow-up. We will endeavour to investigate and report on these topics as time and funding permit. If you care to add to this list, we welcome your ideas.

- A widespread sense or feeling that “fish stocks in Algonquin Park are diminishing”.
- “More and larger parties being taken into White Partridge Lake by horse and cart”.
- “Eliminate the use of motor boats”.
- “There is a reduction of fall visitation due to increasing hunting activity”.
- “No fish to be removed from the Park; i.e. daily catch limits OK, but all fish must be consumed within the Park”.
- “Keep an eye out for winter Park use such as”- snowmobiling on the CNR railway bed.
  - dog sledding in and on the fringes of the Park.
  - lodges in the Park that may want to open in the winter and offer new winter activities.

## A Message From the Board of Directors

The Algonquin Eco Watch Board of Directors sincerely hopes that you enjoy this, our second edition of the “Algonquin Eco Watcher”. It becomes obvious that there are indeed many factors which, if left unchallenged, could result in degradation of the Algonquin Ecosystem. We will attempt to publish at least 2 issues per year, outlining the concerns that we are dealing with and allowing you to plot our progress. Hopefully you will share your concerns with us, so that together we may work toward the long-term protection of the Algonquin Ecosystem.

Watch for further updates as Algonquin Eco Watch continues to work toward the long-term protection of the Algonquin Ecosystem.

*You can learn more about Algonquin Eco Watch by checking our website  
([www.algonquin-eco-watch.com](http://www.algonquin-eco-watch.com)),  
or requesting literature from our toll free number 1-888-894-TREE.  
A donation (membership) form is included below for your convenience.*

**Goal Statement: To assess, protect and sustain the Algonquin Ecosystem for the future.**

**If you agree with the ideas and opinions expressed in the  
Algonquin Eco Watcher, please pass this copy on to a friend.**

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### DONATION FORM

Anyone donating \$15.00 or more will receive a 1 year membership plus a tax deductible receipt. The Algonquin Eco Watch Group is a registered Canadian charity.  
Donations can be mailed to:

ALGONQUIN ECO WATCH, RR#1, Spring Bay, Ontario, P0P 2B0  
*Please make cheques payable to “ Algonquin Eco Watch”*

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