

Algonquin Eco Watch Recommended Conditions to Meet “True Sustainability”

1- Until such time that no-cut reserves totally encircle the entire groundwater sub-catchment basin of all headwater lakes and streams, logging in Algonquin Park cannot be considered to be truly sustainable. The present 30m set-back, an imposed “one-size-fits-all” restriction is simply not biologically adequate.

2- Until such time that a sufficient number of mutually agreed-upon permanent upland old growth stands* is established, logging in Algonquin Park cannot be considered to be truly sustainable.

*Algonquin Eco Watch considers the following definition of permanent old growth stands to be satisfactorily applicable in Algonquin Park:

“An **old-growth forest** is a forest that has attained great age without significant disturbance and thereby exhibits unique ecological features and might be classified as a climax community. Old-growth features include diverse tree-related structures that provide diverse wildlife habitat that increases the biodiversity of the forested ecosystem. The concept of diverse tree structure includes multi-layered canopies and canopy gaps, greatly varying tree heights and diameters, together with diverse tree, shrub and herbaceous species and classes and sizes of woody debris.

Old-growth forests are natural forests that have developed over a long period of time, generally at least 120 years without experiencing severe, stand-replacing disturbance, such as fire, windstorm, or logging. Old-growth forests may be dominated by species such as eastern hemlock, sugar maple, white spruce, or white cedar that are capable of reproducing under a shaded canopy. These old-growth forests can persist indefinitely. Old-growth forest may also be dominated by species such as red pine, white pine, or red oak that do not reproduce as well under shade and that require disturbance to open the canopy. These old-growth forests will eventually be replaced by the more shade-tolerant tree species in the absence of disturbance.

Timber harvesting in old growth stands removes future down woody debris and critical nutrients such as calcium, especially in poorly buffered granitic soils such as those in Algonquin Park. In addition, the movement of heavy equipment in these stands causes soil compaction, which negatively affects groundwater flow patterns and the natural regeneration of shrub and herbaceous species.”