



ALGONQUIN ECO WATCH GROUP

"POLLUTION"

Airborne Pollutants:



The VALE INCO "Superstack", located at Sudbury, Ontario

What goes up must come down! Emissions from smelters in the Sudbury Basin travel hundreds of kilometers through the air before falling back to earth. These emissions contain many heavy metals, some of which are carcinogenic and others that are highly toxic. Prevailing westerly winds in south-central Ontario bring much of this material over and into the Algonquin Ecosystem.

Waterborne Pollutants:



Aerial view of the Kearney Graphite mine, facing east, with the settling ponds in the foreground and Tim Lake in the background.

This graphite mine, near Kearney, Ontario, is situated just outside the west boundary of Algonquin Park. It was operational during the late 1980's and early 1990's and has resulted in increased acidification in the headwaters of the north and south branches of the Magnetawan River. Proposed expansion of this mine along the graphite deposit to the east would affect the headwaters of the Tim River, which flows easterly through Algonquin Park to join the Petawawa River.

Ground Pollutants:



Slag from Sudbury smelters, used to build and maintain the Canadian National Railway through Algonquin Park, has resulted in the presence of ballast along the right-of-way that contains high levels of heavy metals, some of which are carcinogenic and others that are highly toxic. Bulldozing during the removal of tracks and ties in 1997 resulted in the deposition of slag, varying in particle size from dust to 10cm in diameter, into brook trout nursery creeks and onto lake trout spawning beds in the Little Cauchon Lake area. In addition, bird life along the entire length of the right-of-way will ingest small rock particles to aid in their digestive processes. As these particles wear away in the birds' crops, harmful chemical compounds could be assimilated into their body tissues.

Slag has been bulldozed into this brook trout creek at Little Cauchon Lake, where it passes through a culvert on the abandoned CN line through Algonquin Park.

The continuing use of road salt is significantly increasing the salinity of lakes adjacent to Highway 60 through Algonquin Park. Environment Canada tentatively classed road salt as a toxic substance in 2001. Since salt water is denser than pure water, it tends to sink. This is particularly serious in headwater lakes, since the flushing rate is low, and spring and fall runoff characteristically occur from the upper strata.



Found Lake, site of the former Algonquin Park Visitor Centre, adjacent to Highway 60 has salt concentrations many times higher than lakes not affected by road salt.