



ALC Intake Team

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Dear Intake Team:

Re: Algonquin Land Claim and “Public Review” of the Supplemental Environmental Evaluation Report

The transfer of settlement parcels from the Mattawa River Provincial Park and specifically parcels 83F1 and 83F2 requires further evaluation and explanation. Our members have made us aware that during the 2017 ALC public review their input regarding these parcels was ignored. We have received feedback from the **ALC Intake Team**, Ontario Information Centre, Algonquin Land Claim in Pembroke that 83F1 and 83F2 are “still in play” if we bring forth new information. The boundary adjustment to parcel 83F1 should have caused this parcel to be listed in the supplemental report and subject to the review currently underway.

We would, first, like to thank the Algonquin of Ontario Land Claim process for permitting us to participate on the special committee that evaluated options for protection of Camp Island on Trout Lake (Parcel 83F3). We also support current efforts of the Governments of Canada and Ontario to find resolution to the unceded land claims of Ontario Algonquin first nations. We note the **“Supplemental Report to the Draft Environmental Evaluation Report: Proposed Settlement Lands”** has failed to quantify the total number or total area of settlement parcels that have been added. There would appear to have been a significant increase. We also observe that land claim negotiations do not appear to be occurring equitably across the land claim area. Significant numbers of settlement parcels have been added on the west half of the land claim area which suggests that negotiations are unbalanced.

In 1999 the Ontario Provincial Government concluded its **Lands for Life** process which expanded the Mattawa River Provincial Park to encompass new crown land that included lands now being claimed by the Algonquins. The boundaries of this park were extended into North Bay and East Ferris based on recognised heritage and resource features. The expansion of Mattawa River Provincial Park was justified based on the need **“to protect the historical, ecological, environmental and recreational value of this area for future generations”**. The park expansion was supposed to be “for life”.

Since 1999 more information has been discovered about the historical, ecological, environmental and recreational value of lands in question. Wetlands in and adjacent to parcels 83F1 and 83F2 provide habitat for Blanding’s Turtles, a *species at risk*. Our inquiries have determined that wetlands on these parcels have never been evaluated. If evaluated and the presence of Blanding’s turtles is confirmed this would result in these wetlands being classified as provincially significant.

The value assigned to public open space has recently increased as people seek safe havens to recreate out-of-doors. Neighbourhood based open spaces with minimal home to park travel are now at a premium as people working from home seek safe nearby spaces to venture into. In many jurisdictions more lands are now being sought to allow people to safely get out side. The trails at the end of Stepping Stone Lane are experiencing increasing public use due to the pandemic.



The work completed to evaluate the archaeological significance of Camp Island (83F3) has established Camp Island as **a provincially significant archaeological site** rivalling the Franks Bay site on Lake Nipissing. The work concluded that artifacts found on this island were not left by transient people passing through but by people whom once lived on the island and found subsistence in this area. The Special Camp Island Working Committee, with our participation, identified a workaround to ensure protection of Camp Island while preserving public access; a solution we believe everyone benefits from.

The confirmation that Camp Island has **significant provincial archaeological value** has regional implications. The upper three lakes in the Mattawa River watershed: Trout Lake, Turtle Lake and Lake Talon, held a *significant position at the outlet of the upper Great Lakes during the early and mid Holocene*. There have been substantial collections of archaeological artifacts found on both Trout Lake and Lake Talon with private collections now housed at the North Bay and Mattawa Museums. Research is needed to better appreciate who these indigenous people(s) were, where they lived and what significance they played at their time of existence. Lands between Camp Island and Talon Chutes along the Mattawa River shoreline have *significant potential* to harbour evidence that could be critical to that research. It would be our opinion that privatization and disposal of any lands within the boundaries of the Mattawa River Provincial Park at this time would not be in the best interests of the people of Ontario including the Algonquins.

With respect to new information concerning Parcels 83F1 and 83F2 we have completed our own walking survey which we have attached. We challenge the conclusion of the 2017 Environmental Evaluation Report that **"there is no anticipated net effect associated with the transfer of proposed settlement lands into AOO ownership"** related to these parcels. The ***Lands for Life*** process recognized the value of these lands and since that time these values have only increased. Submissions from the neighbourhood pointing out these values seem to have been discredited or ignored in this land claim process for reasons we don't understand. With respect to these parcels, we think you will agree, that the presence of at least one a species at risk (Blanding's turtle), the increasing public use of these lands by surrounding communities, a change in the significance assigned to public open space due to the current health crisis, new information related to past indigenous occupation in the region and new features and characteristics we have observed on these parcels from our survey should compel the province to reconsider the wisdom of turning these lands over for development.

We are asking the province to withdraw the transfer of **any lands** currently within the Mattawa River Provincial Park on the grounds that they offer significant intrinsic value to the communities that surround them, and to the public in general, and impacts need to be properly investigated before potentially important resources and information are lost to development.

Yours truly,

Anthony Falconi (on behalf of the Board of Directors)
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c.c. Pauline Rochefort, Mayor of East Ferris
Al MacDonald, Mayor of North Bay
Vic Fedeli, MPP
Anthony Rota, MP
Brian Tayler, North Bay-Mattawa Conservation Authority