

1. Record of Screening Process (per Section 4.2, Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves, 2005)

Record of Screening Process

Step 1: Assess Project Against List of Projects (Appendix 2)

- Project is listed as Category A or D in Appendix 2 and no further screening is required to determine category. (ID # ____)
- Project is listed in Appendix 2 and requires screening to category. (ID # 83, Transfer, renew or amend an existing disposition).
- Project is not listed in Appendix 2 and requires screening to determine category.

Step 2: Prepare Project Description

Name of Project

Renewal of existing disposition: extending the term of occupation for existing cottage lots in Algonquin Provincial Park (the project).

Provincial Park or Conservation Reserve name and location

Algonquin Provincial Park

Purpose and rationale (problem or opportunity)

Project Purpose:

This proposed project would provide the opportunity to extend the term of occupation for all 303 existing private, non-commercial cottage lots in Algonquin Provincial Park (hereafter referred to as Algonquin) from the current expiry of December 31, 2017 to December 31, 2038 (i.e., additional 21 years). The extension would provide cottagers with the continued, exclusive right to occupy and use existing cottage lots. Potential negative environmental effects associated with the proposed project would be mitigated, to the extent possible, through conditions imposed through the tenure instrument, including some new conditions that would limit certain activities carried out on the cottage lots.

For clarity, this project does not consider the granting of dispositions for new private, non-commercial cottage lots within the park. Further, activities on the existing cottage lots (e.g., the construction of new, or the replacement or relocation of existing buildings, structures or other infrastructure, removal of vegetation, excavation), that have the potential to affect the environment, including cultural heritage resources, would require additional approvals/authorizations.

Land Disposition Context:

MNR receives applications from non-MNR proponents for the disposition of certain or all rights to a Crown resource in a provincial park for the occupation and use of park lands.

In these cases, the Crown's granting of the disposition is the project that is subject to this Class EA.

Background:

Established in 1893 Algonquin Provincial Park was the first provincial park to be established in Ontario. It is located in south-central Ontario between Georgian Bay and the Ottawa River (see Map 1, attached) and is surrounded by the communities of Pembroke, North Bay, Huntsville and Bancroft. Spanning over 763,000 hectares, Algonquin is the third largest provincial park in Ontario.

The Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan classifies Algonquin as a natural environment park. "*The objectives of natural environment class parks are to protect outstanding recreational landscapes, representative ecosystems and provincially significant elements of Ontario's natural and cultural heritage and to provide high quality recreational and educational experiences.*" (*Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006*). The goal of Algonquin specifically is "*to provide protection of natural and cultural features, continuing opportunities for a diversity of low-intensity recreational, wilderness and natural environmental experiences; and within this provision continue and enhance the Park's contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of the region*" (Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan, 1998).

The essence of Algonquin is its vast interior of maple hills, rocky ridges, wetland complexes and thousands of lakes, ponds and streams. The park is located in a transition zone between the northern boreal forests and southern deciduous hardwood forests which results in a rich diversity of northern and southern life forms. Common tree species include sugar maple, yellow birch, American beech, trembling aspen, white birch, red pine, red maple, hemlock, white pine, black spruce, tamarack, eastern white cedar and balsam fir. The park supports many wildlife species such as moose, deer, otter, black bear, red-shouldered hawk, lake trout, brook trout and more than 100 species of breeding birds.

Highway 60 crosses the southern part of the park over a distance of approximately 63 kilometres. Most facilities (e.g., car campgrounds, picnic areas, beaches, trails, youth camps, lodges, private cottages, etc.) are concentrated along this corridor. In addition to recreational activities such as hiking, picnicking, swimming, fishing, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and mountain biking, the park also supports other activities including scientific research, hunting and trapping. Algonquin is unique in being the only provincial park to allow commercial forestry.

Algonquin receives an average of over 850,000 visits each year. Nearly 60% of all backcountry camping reservations in Ontario provincial parks are made for Algonquin. The backcountry (interior) portions of the park are used extensively for recreational purposes, primarily canoeing, backpacking and camping. The park also offers numerous natural and cultural heritage education opportunities including a visitor centre with exhibits, and a logging museum. Privately operated commercial lodges and youth camps exist in the park.

Algonquin's cultural history has long been documented. In 1974, the Algonquin Provincial Park Master Plan recognized the protection of cultural heritage values and identified 48 historical zones within the park. The current Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan (1998) continues to identify 48 historical zones that provide the best representation of the park's cultural history. The current historical zone system provides the opportunity for future study, public understanding and heritage appreciation of the cultural heritage of Algonquin.

In 1992, Algonquin was designated as a national historic site by the Historic Sites and

Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC). The park's natural assets, water and lumber resources, early evidence of fire prevention and assisted reforestation, railway remnants, hotels, lodges, cottages, commercial camps, park interpretative programs, and park management techniques are listed as some of the park's character-defining elements.

In an effort to increase tourism in Algonquin, private cottage lots were made available to the general public from the early 1900s to the 1950s. By 1954, 454 cottage lots had been established in the park. With the passing of the *Provincial Parks Act* in 1954, the government reversed its policy of supporting private cottages in provincial parks. As a result, no new private tenure was to be permitted in provincial parks, and existing private cottages in Algonquin were to be 'phased out' over time. Private cottagers in Algonquin that existed at that time were informed that they would be able keep their cottage lot for the duration of their then-current term plus an additional 21 years. Although, subsequent governments amended the expiry date in 1978 and 1986, the provincial governments have maintained the intent of phasing out these cottages over time. Presently, there are 303 private, non-commercial cottage lots in Algonquin. These existing dispositions expire on December 31, 2017, pursuant to the terms and conditions outlined in the current tenure instrument, Ontario Regulation 347/07 under the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006* (PPCRA), provincial park policy and the Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan.

The cottages, buildings and other associated infrastructure on the cottage lots are privately owned by the cottagers (i.e., not owned by the Crown). There are known archeological sites, built heritage structures and other cultural heritage values on or within the vicinity (250 metres) of the cottage lots. Based on the heritage assessment modeling tool used to support forest management planning, the cottage lakes also intersect with areas of high archeological potential.

Project description, scale, duration

MNR will evaluate the environmental effects of extending the term of occupation for all 303 existing private, non-commercial cottage lots in Algonquin Provincial Park as a single comprehensive project. The Ministry is not evaluating each of the 303 dispositions as separate projects. This approach:

- is consistent with historic treatment of private cottage dispositions in Algonquin Provincial Park (i.e., decision in 1986 to establish a common expiry date);
- provides a single, streamlined environmental assessment process for Aboriginal communities, interested persons and government agencies to comment on; and
- aligns with the comprehensive approach in the October 2012 policy proposal (*Private Cottages in Algonquin Provincial Park: A Policy Proposal*, Environmental Registry #011-7289).

Study area that may be affected

Although the 303 existing private, non-commercial cottage lots collectively occupy approximately 131 hectares and 26 km of shoreline, it is important to recognize that any environmental effects resulting from activities located on the cottage lots may extend to areas beyond the boundaries of the cottage lots.

Map 1 illustrates the distribution of cottage lots within the park. They are located on 22 of the approximately 2500 lakes in the park (Table 1). Almost all of the cottage lots (i.e., 274 or 90%) are located within 2 quaternary sub-watersheds that are along the Highway 60 corridor (Map 2, Table 1). The remaining 29 cottage lots are located away from the Highway 60 corridor within four other quaternary sub-watersheds. Furthermore, 66% of the cottage lots are concentrated on three lakes: Smoke, Canoe and Cache.

Applicable MNR policies, procedures, manuals, guidelines

- *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act (PPCRA)* and its regulations
- *Endangered Species Act (ESA)* and its regulations
- *Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan (1998)*
- *Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies (1992 Update)*
- *Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, 2010)*
- *Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves (2005)*, including MNR's *Technical Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Resources for Projects Planned Under the Class EA for MNR Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects and the Class EA for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*.

Other required approvals or permits

Proceeding with the proposed project is dependent on final decisions regarding private cottages in Algonquin Provincial Park comprised of:

- an approved amendment to Ontario Regulation 347/07 Provincial Parks: General Provisions;
- an approved amendment to Ontario Provincial Parks: Planning and Management Policies and;
- an approved administrative update to the Algonquin Provincial Park Management Plan.

The Ministry is working through these processes in a coordinated manner to ensure consistent decision making.

Alternatives to the project and alternative methods of carrying out the project (explain if no alternatives)

Generally, the purpose of evaluating projects under the Class EA PPCR is to assess the potential environmental effects of implementing a site specific project (undertaking) to help ensure potential net negative effects on the values within a protected area are minimized, and to provide for meaningful public consultation. Typically the project/undertaking has been previously identified as a permitted activity in higher level, overarching protected area policy direction (e.g., legislation and regulations, provincial level policy, park specific management direction). These overarching policies are developed under separate consultation and approval processes (e.g., consultation on

the Environmental Registry) and are not subject to the Class EA evaluation process. The Class EA process complements these other processes by allowing MNR to evaluate the potential environmental effects of implementing these policy enabled projects/undertakings, on a project-by-project basis to ensure appropriate considerations and mitigation techniques are in place when the project/undertaking is actually being carried out.

In October 2012, MNR invited comments on a policy proposal that would extend the term of occupation for 303 existing private, non-commercial cottage lots in Algonquin to December 31, 2038 (i.e., additional 21 years) subject to conditions that limit certain activities carried out on the cottage lots. This environmental assessment process aligns with this policy proposal and therefore no alternatives or alternative methods to carrying out the project are being considered at this time.

If the policy proposal is not approved, this proposed project will not proceed.

Preliminary evaluation (cost, feasibility, effectiveness, potential effects)

Costs:

If the term of occupation for all 303 existing private, non-commercial cottage lots is extended to the December 31, 2038, tenure holders would be required to pay all applicable land rental fees, service fees and taxes, charges or debts in respect of the land. Fees would be based on fair return to the Crown for the exclusive use of the cottage lots by tenure holders and full cost recovery for administering the tenure.

Potential Effects of the Project:

If the term of occupation for all 303 existing private, non-commercial cottage lots in Algonquin Provincial Park is extended from the current expiry of December 31, 2017 to December 31, 2038 (i.e., additional 21 years) subject to conditions imposed through the tenure instrument, including some new conditions that would limit certain activities carried out on the cottage lots, the net negative environmental effects of this project are anticipated to be low-medium.

Relevant park data/information and other comparable information/literature, suggests that there is a high degree of certainty that private cottages and their associated uses contribute to the cumulative effect on, but are not the sole effect on, water quality, riparian and littoral habitat, lake trout and brook trout habitat, the spread of invasive species and other park values (see screening table).

The majority of cottage lots are located along the Highway 60 corridor where other development (e.g., campgrounds, visitor centre, trails, picnic areas, beaches, park access points, commercial lodges, youth camps) is located. The cottages and their associated uses would affect the remote character/experience of the park for some park users. It is reasonable to anticipate that the net effects on remoteness would generally be greater on lakes where there is little/no other development, and lower on lakes where other development exists.

Algonquin Provincial Park is part of both the Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) and the Williams Treaties First Nations asserted traditional territories. Potential exists to impact the AOO's Aboriginal title claim and their exercise of Aboriginal rights in the area. William Treaties First Nations asserts unextinguished harvesting rights in their asserted traditional territory which includes the west side of Algonquin Park. They have also claimed the restoration of harvesting rights.

Applicable policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines, and other permits or

approvals required to undertake the project (see Appendices 3 and 7)

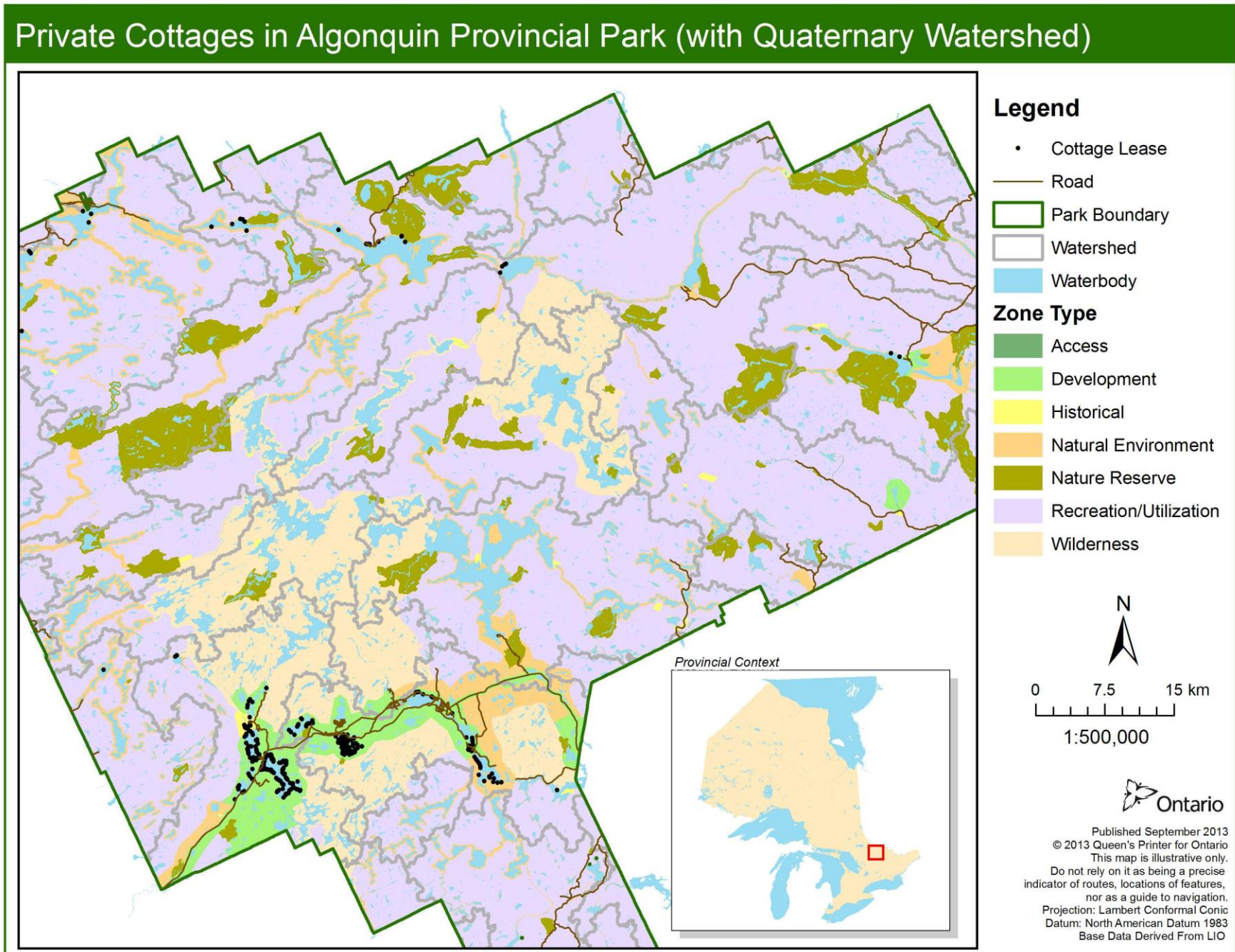
See above

Mitigation features that will apply to the design of the project

Potential negative environmental effects associated with the proposed project would be mitigated, to the extent possible, through conditions imposed through the tenure instrument, including some new conditions that would limit certain activities carried out on the cottage lots. The conditions would be imposed on every tenure instrument equally (i.e., all tenure instruments would have the same conditions). These include, but are not limited to, conditions that:

- restrict the size, type, number and location of structures that may be built on or on the water in front of the lots,
- require periodic inspections of septic systems, including remediation where necessary,
- prohibit the expansion of lawns and gardens,
- prohibit the use of pesticides/fertilizers,
- limit species of vegetation that may be planted on the lots, and removal of targeted invasive species,
- limit the amount of shoreline alteration/disturbance and hardened surfaces (e.g., walkways, patios),
- control the disposal of garbage, recycling and organic wastes,
- restrict the use of generators, and
- require further cultural heritage assessments (e.g., archaeological assessments), where a cottager proposes to carry out an activity on a cottage lot that has the potential to, or would result in significant ground disturbance and/or disturb, alter or damage cultural heritage resources.

Map 1. Distribution of private cottages in Algonquin Provincial Park.



Map 2. Distribution of private cottages along the Highway 60 corridor in Algonquin Provincial Park (with quaternary watersheds).

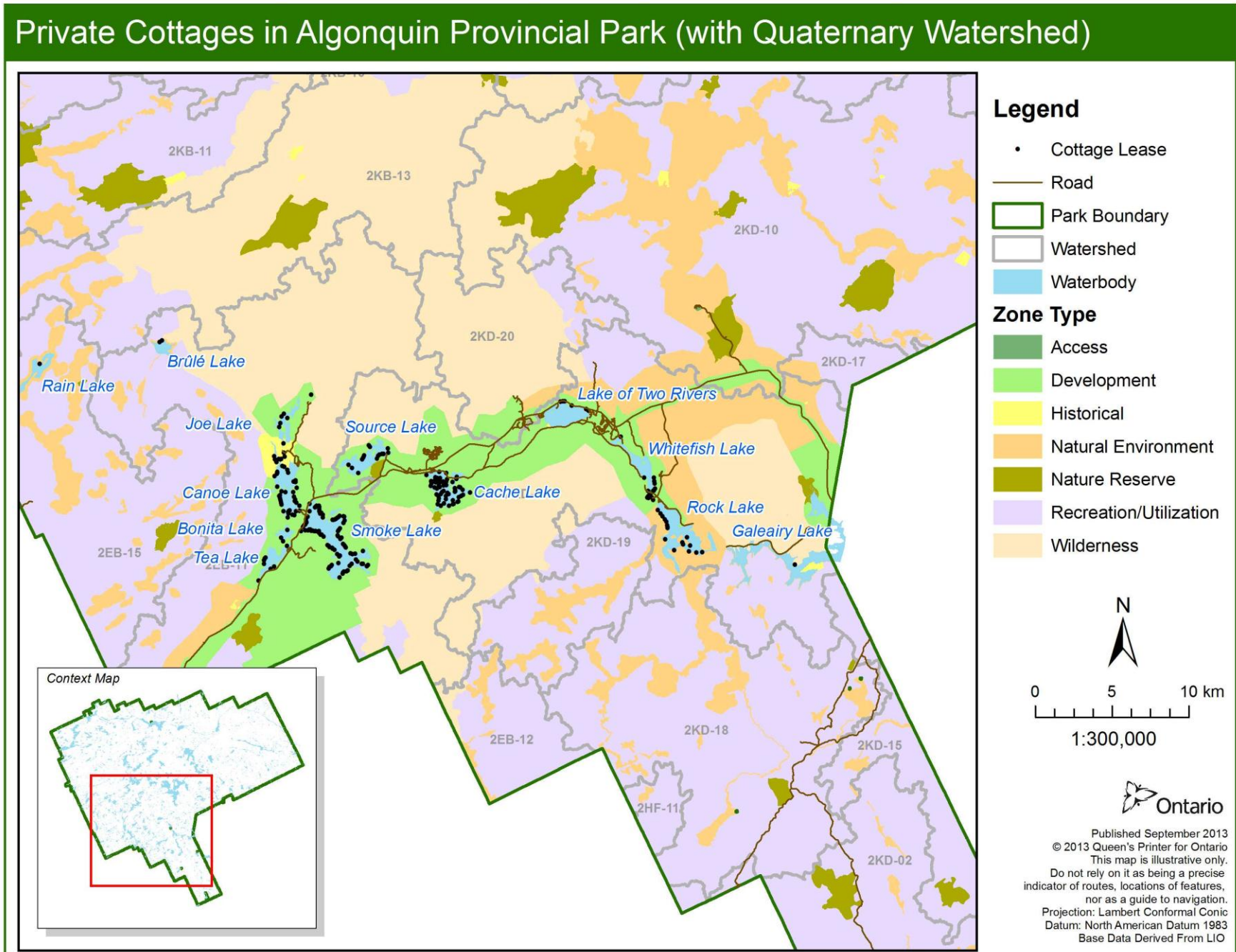


Table 1. Overview of private cottages by lake and location within Algonquin Provincial Park.

Lake	Along Highway 60 corridor?	Quaternary Watershed	Number of Cottage Lots
Bonita Lake	Yes	2EB-11	1
Brule Lake	Yes	2EB-11	2
Cache Lake	Yes	2KD-01	62
Canoe Lake	Yes	2EB-11	48
Cauchon Lake	No	2KB-08	1
Cedar Lake	No	2KB-01	10
Galeairy Lake	Yes	2KD-01	1
Grand Lake	No	2KB-02	2
Joe Lake	Yes	2EB-11	6
Kioshkokwi Lake	No	2JE-04	3
Lake of Two Rivers	Yes	2KD-01	6
Little Cauchon Lake	No	2KB-08	5
Little Joe Lake	Yes	2EB-11	1
Manitou Lake	No	2JE-04	2
North Tea Lake	No	2JE-04	1
Radiant Lake	No	2KB-01	4
Rain Lake	No	2EB-15	1
Rock Lake	Yes	2KD-01	24
Smoke Lake	Yes	2EB-11	89
Source Lake	Yes	2KD-01	15
Tea Lake	Yes	2EB-11	10
Whitefish Lake	Yes	2KD-01	9
			303 (Total)

Step 3: Assess Against Screening Criteria (per Table 4.1)

Main potential net environmental effects (attach screening table)

If the term of occupation for all 303 existing private, non-commercial cottage lots in Algonquin Provincial Park is extended from the current expiry of December 31, 2017 to December 31, 2038 (i.e., additional 21 years) subject to conditions imposed through the tenure instrument, including some new conditions that would limit certain activities carried out on the cottage lots, the net negative environmental effects of this project are anticipated to be low-medium.

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Additional investigation and analysis required to confirm environmental effects

No additional investigation or analyses are proposed at this time.

Step 4: Assign Project to Appropriate Category

Anticipated level of public or agency concern

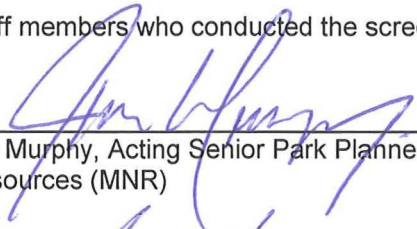
Medium potential for some concern, based on the results of previous consultation regarding this initiative carried out under the Environmental Bill of Rights (Environmental Registry policy proposal # 011-7289).

This project has been assigned to Category B.

Brief rationale

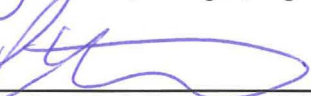
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Staff members who conducted the screening:



Date: Oct. 2/13
Jim Murphy, Acting Senior Park Planner, Algonquin Zone, Ontario Parks, Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)


Date: Oct 2/2013
Sandy Dobbyn, Zone Ecologist, Algonquin Zone, Ontario Parks, MNR

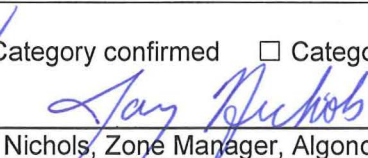

Date: 2 October, 2013
Jennifer Hoare, Biologist, Algonquin Zone, Ontario Parks, MNR


Date: Sept 27/2013
Cass Goulet, Acting Policy Advisor, Parks & Protected Areas Policy Section, Natural Heritage, Lands & Protected Spaces Branch, MNR


Date: Sep 27/13
Kirsty Dickson, Coordinator – Strategic Planning and Evaluation, Parks & Protected Areas Policy Section, Natural Heritage, Lands & Protected Spaces Branch, MNR


Date: Sept. 27, 2013
Rob Davis, Manager, Parks & Protected Areas Policy Section, Natural Heritage, Lands & Protected Spaces Branch, MNR

Step 5: MNR Manager Confirms or Modifies Category

Category confirmed Category modified and brief rationale Category not confirmed

Date: October 4, 2013
Jay Nichols, Zone Manager, Algonquin Zone, Ontario Parks, MNR

Additional notes/direction for project evaluation (e.g., further studies or assessment required to confirm category, further investigation of alternatives required, etc.)