



February 20, 2021

Subject Line: Response to Draft 2-year Contingency Plan (2021-2023) for the Armstrong Forest

Dear Planning Team for Armstrong Forest:

In the mid-1990s Environment North was heavily involved with the Wabakimi Park Boundary Committee to discuss and debate the expansion of the park. Our representative on the committee was Bruce Petersen. The park was expanded to 1,000,000 ha. At that time, we hoped (strongly) that Caribou Lake, Little Caribou Lake, Big Lake, and the nest of small lakes just east of Caribou Lake (D'Alton and other small surrounding lakes) would be included in the park. They were not included, in large part due to possible mineral potential (including ongoing prospecting) in the D'Alton Lake area. There was drilling occurring at the time but to date there have been no significant discoveries. We were disappointed that it did not become part of the park.

In the late 1990s Bruce Petersen again represented us on the Boreal West Round Table (Lands for Life, a high level and high profile land use planning process by the Conservative government at the time, lasting well over a year.). That Roundtable recommended park status for this area again, but a compromise was reached. The Minister and Cabinet decided to leave it as Crown Land, but with a special emphasis on protecting remote tourism, caribou, fisheries, and other wildlife. Lands for Life became Ontario's Living Legacy (OLL), and its province-wide land use decisions were all later combined into CLUPA (Crown Land Use Policy Atlas). That is still the in-force land use plan today. Forest management planning exists within and is secondary to the policies established by CLUPA 2616. I am attaching the directions for land use in that area. As you will see, it is very clear that while forestry may occur, forestry must defer to remote tourism, wildlife protection, and fisheries management.

We do understand, and do not necessarily oppose, that some logging in that area may occur. But we do insist that any difficult forest management decisions ensure the sustainability of caribou, remote tourism and ecotourism. We understand that there are some decisions to be made regarding access, and location and permanence of roads.

We are sending this letter to express our hope that wherever possible, roads are located carefully, have least possible impact and winter only and removed and remediated after harvesting where appropriate and possible. This is particularly important near the north half of Caribou Lake, Hollingsworth Lake, and the group of lakes surrounding D'Alton Lake.

CLUPA 2616 is a unique area. We feel strongly that it continues to merit the strongest possible protections to maintain its remoteness, and the viability of the woodland caribou calving area, migration corridors, and both winter and summer habitats.

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