

Question for the Ontario Algonquin Land Claim Negotiators – February 4, 2021 from the Trout Lake Conservation Association

The following questions are made on behalf of our members that live in East Ferris.

In the *public notice* that accompanied the first Environmental Evaluation Report prepared in 2017, the transfer of lands negotiated with the AOO was summarized as follows:

“A key component of the AIP is the proposed transfer of provincial lands to AOO ownership. The transfer would occur following the approval of a final Settlement Agreement and include the transfer of approximately, but not less than, 117,500 acres of provincial lands.”

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) has prepared a Draft Environmental Evaluation Report (EER) to assess the potential environmental effects and proposed mitigation measures of the proposed transfer of lands in accordance with the requirements for Category C projects under the Algonquin Land Claim Declaration Order made under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. The Draft EER includes:

- The transfer of approximately, but not less than, 117,500 acres of provincial lands;
- The transfer of associated assets (e.g. Ministry of Transportation (MTO) patrol yards, former ranger camps); and
- Other activities such as amending boundary regulations for affected non-operating provincial parks (e.g. Foy Property Provincial Park).”

We point out that the underlining above was added by us. It quantifies the impact of the negotiations as approximately 117,500 acres at that point-in-time.

In the *notice* to review the Supplemental Environmental Evaluation Report this past fall (note that the word *public* is intentionally left out) we immediately looked for an updated summary of the total acreage now on the table as a result of negotiations between the issuance of the EER and the supplemental EER). None was provided that we could find in any of the documentation we reviewed.

Question 1: What is the total acreage of lands currently on the table for transfer as a result of the negotiations over the past several years (which sparked the need for the supplemental EER)? Why was this summary not provided in the latest circulation?

Question 2: What are the total acreages of lands to be transferred, i.e., in the original EER and now considering the impact of the supplemental EER, for the District of Nipissing?

Question 3: How would these total acreages in Nipissing District compare to other parts of the land claim area, for example in Lanark or Russell Prescott Counties?

Question 4: As parcels are added or subtracted from the Agreement-In-Principle, does this have any impact on the cash settlement also proposed in the Agreement-In-Principle?

We feel the land claim is unbalanced and negotiators are purposely diverting claims to this area. Is this a strategy of the provincial negotiators? If the total land area has increased (possibly significantly) and the proposed transfer of funds has not correspondingly changed, this suggests to us that Ontario is not fairing well in the negotiation process? How can this be rationalized?