

BEYOND WABAKIMI – CROWN LANDS

Most Crown land in Ontario is administered by the [Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry](#) (MNR), however, national parks, Indian reserves and some harbours, airports and canal systems are controlled by the Canadian federal government. Provincial parks and conservation reserves are Crown lands that are planned, developed and managed by [Ontario Parks](#).

In total, Crown land makes up about 87% of Ontario's land mass, or 937,000 square kilometres. Land on the beds of most navigable lakes and rivers is considered provincial Crown land. These beds alone constitute over 164,000 square kilometres, mostly under the Great Lakes system. With the exception of the "land under water", there is very little Crown land in Southern Ontario. In Northern Ontario, provincial Crown land makes up over 95% of the land base.

The rules governing the administration of Crown lands other than provincial parks and conservation reserves are laid out in a provincial law known as the [Public Lands Act](#). In this statute, the term "public land" means Crown land. However, outside the statute, the term public land is sometimes used to mean any land that is controlled or owned by a provincial, federal or municipal public agency. On land which is truly "owned" by any of these agencies, the Act does not apply.

Wabakimi Provincial Park is surrounded by Crown lands that lie in four different MNR administrative districts (Sioux Lookout, Dryden, Thunder Bay & Nipigon). These public lands are designated as general use areas. Descriptions of the commercial and recreational land uses and activities currently permitted in each of these parks are available in their respective policy reports posted in the [Crown Land Use Policy Atlas](#) (CLUPA).

General Use Areas

ID No.	Park Name	Hectares	km ²	Acres	Mi. ²
G2697	Geraldton	2,652,530	26,525	6,554,544	10,241
G2515	Sioux Lookout	1,415,209	14,152	3,497,058	5,464
G2619	Armstrong/Kagianagami	773,292	7,733	1,910,846	2,986
G2616	Armstrong/Wabakimi	154,007	1,540	380,560	595
G2516	Seseganaga/Bell Lakes	129,265	1,293	319,421	499
Totals		5,124,303	51,243	12,662,429	19,785

Crown Land Camping

Ontario's Crown land provides the opportunity for many outdoor recreational activities including canoeing and camping. Although most Crown land is available for the enjoyment of both Ontario residents and visitors, access to some Crown land may be restricted or limited. Under authority of the Public Lands Act, the MNR&F may post signs to limit certain kinds of travel or activity (including camping) on Crown land for reasons of public safety or environmental protection. Visitors to the Wabakimi Area should contact the local MNR&F District office for more information about the Crown land in the area they hope to visit.

For residents of Canada, travel for recreational purposes on Crown lands and waters is free and unrestricted. Generally, camping on Crown land is allowed free for up to 21 days at any one site, except where posted otherwise.

In Northern Ontario, north of the French and Mattawa Rivers, non-residents of Canada 18 years of age or older must purchase a Crown Land Camping Permit to camp on Crown land that is not a regulated (green) zone or under some other similar restriction.

Forest Management Units

For the purpose of forest management, Ontario's Crown forest (or Forest Management Planning Area) is divided into 44 geographic planning areas known as forest management units (MU's). Before any forestry activities can take place in a MU, an approved forest management plan (FMP) must be in place.

Most FMU's are managed by individual forest companies under a Sustainable Forest Licence (SFL). The SFL holder is responsible for carrying out the following activities subject to MNR regulations and approvals:

- forest management planning
- harvesting
- access road construction
- forest renewal and maintenance
- monitoring and reporting

Currently, five FMU's lie on the Crown lands adjacent to, or near Wabakimi Provincial Park.

Existing Forest Management Units in the Wabakimi Area

MU#	MU Name	Hectares	km2	Acres	Mi.2
175	Caribou Forest	610,629	6,102	1,508,897	2,358
230	English River Forest	1,030,637	10,306	2,546,760	3,979
415	Ogoki Forest	1,021,569	10,216	2,524,352	3,944
815	Lake Nipigon Forest	1,284,335	13,843	3,420,767	5,345
035	Black Spruce Forest	1,214,100	12,141	3,000,106	4,688
	Totals	5,261,270	52,613	13,000,881	20,314

Crown Land Canoe Routes

The canoe routes that lie on the Crown lands adjacent to Wabakimi Provincial Park provide access to the park from road and rail access points as well as strategic links to other nearby protected places such as Albany River, St. Raphael, Kopka River and Brightsand River Provincial Parks and the Attwood River Conservation Reserve. These Crown land canoe routes do not enjoy the same degree of protection as those that lie within these protected places. They are subject to competing values and land uses and are prone to the impacts of resource extraction activities and the associated development of permanent roads and railways as well as other structures or facilities such as hydro-electric generating stations, transmission lines and the shoreline development of cottages and resource-based tourism facilities.

The Wabakimi Project has undertaken rehabilitation and mapping of the canoe routes that lie on the Crown lands adjacent to Wabakimi Provincial Park and has been actively involved with planning processes for the forest management units surrounding the park. As part of this effort, a Survey has been prepared to determine how Crown land canoe routes and related land-based values are treated on forest management units across the province.

The Survey demonstrates the disparity, and in some cases, the total absence of protective measures for Crown land canoe routes across Ontario's forests and presents a baseline from which to negotiate their improved protection during each successive forest management planning process. As new forest management plans are developed and approved, the survey is updated to reflect any change of direction that impacts Crown land canoe routes.

[*Survey of Areas of Concern for Canoe Routes & Related Land-Based Values on Ontario Forest Management Units*](#)

Experience gained by The Wabakimi Project in negotiating improved protection for the Crown land canoe routes in the Greater Wabakimi Area has raised interest for the development of a set of uniform, province-wide protective measures to guarantee their continued enjoyment by future generations of both residents and visitors. The forest management planning process already has a mechanism in place in the form of forest management guides--sets of standards, guidelines and best management practices designed to protect an identified cultural, historical, natural or recreational value.

A Proposal ... to Protect and Conserve Crown Land Canoe Routes – [Executive Summary](#) – [Complete Text](#)