

## **Column Five**

### **The Algonquin Land Claim –Forestry**

*by Robert Potts, Principal Negotiator and Senior Legal Counsel for the Algonquins of Ontario*

Forested areas have been integral to the Algonquin way of life since time immemorial. The proposed Forestry Chapter of the Preliminary Draft Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) recognizes the importance of the forest industry in the Algonquin Settlement Area to both the Algonquins of Ontario (AOO) and their neighbours.

The cornerstone of this Chapter is the commitment by the AOO and Ontario to work cooperatively to maintain support for the existing forest industry, while increasing Algonquin participation in, and benefits from the forestry sector. This commitment reflects the importance of forestry to the culture, economic stability and prosperity of the AOO.

Through several proposed initiatives and collaborative partnerships, the Preliminary Draft AIP carves out more meaningful participation for the AOO within the forest industry. A number of proposed elements to be reflected in a Final Agreement are highlighted below.

### **Economic Development and Training Opportunities**

Key to the Forestry Chapter is the development of economic opportunities and supporting measures to increase Algonquin employment and participation in the forest industry throughout the Settlement Area, including in Algonquin Park. These initiatives include:

- notifying the AOO of government contracts and job opportunities related to forestry in Algonquin Park
- encouraging potential Algonquin employment, training and contract opportunities with Sustainable Forest License (SFL) holders
- the consideration of the potential for Algonquin benefits as a relevant factor when Ontario is evaluating tender bids or other government contracting procedures
- the provision of training opportunities by Ontario and the Algonquin Forestry Authority for the AOO in the forestry industry in Algonquin Park, including silviculture

### **Forestry Management and Planning**

A Final Agreement will also set out the nature and scope of Algonquin participation in forestry management and planning, including representation on planning teams, both inside and outside of Algonquin Park. In addition, Ontario will appoint at a minimum one person nominated by the

AOO to the Board of Directors of the Algonquin Forestry Authority for Algonquin Park.

Ontario continues its commitment to consultation with the AOO on any new forestry policy initiatives within the Settlement Area, including the forestry tenure and pricing review.

### **Moving Forward**

The AOO, Ontario and representatives for SFLs located within the Algonquin Settlement Area have already begun working together to address forestry matters related to the Algonquin treaty negotiations as well as to collaboratively develop economic opportunities to enhance the competitiveness of the region.

As we move forward towards a historic modern-day treaty, the AOO are committed to working in partnership with Ontario and our neighbours to foster a sustainable forestry industry built on a foundation of economic prosperity, conservation and stewardship.

*This column is the fifth in a series providing insights into Algonquin history, the foundation for the land claim, elements of the Preliminary Draft AIP and next steps in the journey. The next column will focus on the Heritage and Culture component of the Preliminary Draft AIP. For more information visit [www.tanakiwin.com](http://www.tanakiwin.com).*