



FOW comments on ten-year Wabadowgang Noopming Forest plan, proposes new Conservation Reserves and limits on forest roads. Full report below!



John Holmes Wabakimi Trip Report Webinar This Sunday, Jan. 23rd "Palisade, Grayson, and Caribou Rivers solo."

8 p.m. EST; 7 p.m. CST; 6 p.m. MST; 5 p.m. PST ([Zoom Link & Phone-in Info](#)).

A presentation on a 15 day solo canoe trip starting in Kenoji



Help us make a difference for Wabakimi!

FOW has followed and participated in the Wabadowgang Noopming forest planning process closely. [Our](#)

Lake, travelling the Palisade River to Burntrock Lake, then backtracking to the Grayson River into Whitewater Lake. Continuing south to Lonebreast Bay and Smoothrock Lake, before heading down the Caribou River to Caribou and Little Caribou Lakes. ([Read his trip report here.](#)) John is FOW [Secretary-Treasurer](#), past Board Chair, and trip leader/participant on numerous The Wabakimi Project trips.

UPCOMING WEBINARS

Jan. 30th, Ontario Protected Areas with Ontario Nature's Julee Boan and Jackie Ho

Feb. 13, Woodland Caribou and their relationship with the land with retired MNR biologist Gerry Racey

Feb. 27, Vern Fish retraces the 1784 voyage of Edward Umfreville up the Ottertooth canyon.

March 20, Shannon Walshe, Wabakimi Provincial Park biologist, ecological management in our huge wilderness park

[new comments take us into new territory](#), with our advocacy for Conservation Reserves, and if not that, additional protected "Areas of Concern". No doubt there will be timber harvest, but it can be done in a more ecological way; with temporary winter roads and less intrusion into the natural environment.

The fact we're now over 250 members underscores the broad public interest in this canoeing, wilderness, wildlife and recreational resource. Many have joined FOW to help with paddling plans; but once you've been to Wabakimi it becomes part of you and we hope you'll see the importance of our advocacy for this resource.

If you can attend Canoecopia on March 11-13 in Madison, Wisconsin, please come and talk us! And as members, attend our Annual Meeting in-person or by Zoom on Sunday, March 13th.

Vern Fish, President

P.S. We need volunteers for our Canoecopia booth, committees (Expedition, Conservation, Wabakimi Rendezvous, Cartography, & we have several openings on our [Board of Directors](#).)

Wabadowgang Noopming Forest Planning & Proposed Conservation Reserves

The Friends of Wabakimi (FOW) has proposed four new Conservation Reserves and limitations on planned logging roads with our [formal comments for the Wabadowgang Noopming \(W.N.\) Forest ten year plan \(2023 to 2033\)](#). These four areas are closely proximate to Wabakimi Provincial Park and within the [woodland caribou special area of concern](#). The FOW also clarified that Trail Lake (aka Tamarack Lake) Road should remain undeveloped so as to not cause

increased pressure on sensitive caribou areas in Wabakimi Provincial Park's SE corner.

The FOW represents wilderness paddlers and recreational businesses with a current membership of over 250 who have an interest in the Greater Wabakimi Area. The FOW is the successor organization to [The Wabakimi Project](#), which explored and mapped routes, portages and campsites over a fourteen year period. The maps for the W.N. Forest are contained in [Wabakimi Canoe Routes Volume 5](#). FOW President Vern Fish is our representative on the W.P. Forest Local Citizens Committee (LCC). [Previously, FOW met with the MNRF and their consultants.](#)

Of significance is Ontario's [Crown Land Use Policy Atlas Policy \(CLUPA\) Report G2616: Caribou Lake / Wabakimi, adopted in 2006](#), which states, "The primary use for this area will be commercial tourism. Extractive activities such as timber harvesting, while growing in importance, will remain secondary. Road access will be managed to maintain commercial tourism and fish and wildlife habitat. Land use conflicts will be resolved recognizing the importance of commercial recreation in the area."

Proposed Conservation Reserves While creation of new Conservation Reserves is outside the purview of the Ministry of Natural Resources Forestry's (MNRF) forest planning process; it is within the broad responsibilities of the MNRF generally.

- **Caribou Lake** (the northern half). The northern shore, with its dozens of islands, has been documented as critical calving habitat and an east-west migration corridor. Caribou need to be protected from adverse influences that will reduce their movement and their calving success. These impacts include roads, adjacent logging and excessive recreational use in May and June. These impacts could be well achieved through status as a Conservation Reserve, with appropriate management prescriptions under the Public Lands Act. Aside from concerns about affecting caribou calving, the northern half of Caribou Lake has a relatively high intensive use recreational capability. It acts as a "filter/buffer" to reduce overuse of the more sensitive sites inside the park.
- **Caribou - Campbell - Hollingsworth Triangle** - This area is bounded by the park on the west and lies north of Caribou Lake and south of Campbell and Hollingsworth Lake including Campbell Creek, which is an important walleye spawning area. Campbell Lake is a valuable and remote lake trout lake. Hollingsworth Lake has been well documented by MNRF as critical caribou calving area, historically and presently.
- **The "D'Alton Block" (aka Big River Canoe Route)** - This area includes most of the Big River drainage stretching from Linklater Lake on the north, to Lower Pawshowconk on the east, the Big Lake to the south and northeastern arm of Caribou Lake. The D'Alton Block would include D'Alton, Reef, Moonshine, Cosmo, Amra, Michell, Cumaway, Rhodes, Ruxton, Pawshowconk and the Linklater Creek chain. It also includes all the Big River as far east as the McKinley Road.
- The D'Alton Block has an unusual high concentration of interconnected small lakes and rivers. It has been documented as historical caribou habitat and migration corridors. There are several valuable remote tourism outposts scattered across the "block". This tangle of lakes has

the potential to be enhanced for recreational canoeing and creates opportunities for canoe outfitting for the Whitesands community.

- Currently, canoeing access to the D'Alton Block is limited to portaging in from Caribou Lake. If the existing Big Lake Road were opened to recreational use up to the stream crossing just south of Big Lake, another route would be available to paddlers. This limited access would still maintain the wilderness character of the outpost cabins. It would also help reduce canoeing pressure on caribou calving on Caribou Lake in May and June.
- **Doe-Fawn Lake Complex** - This area is located north and northeast of Collins. It is bounded on the south by the CNR Line, on the west and north by Wabakimi Park and on the east by Fawn and Doe Lakes. This area features shallow soils and is important currently used year-round caribou habitat. This small but important area deserves status as a Conservation Reserve to protect this caribou habitat. Eliminating or limiting road access and designating the area west of Doe and Fawn Lakes as a Conservation Reserve will accomplish both of these goals.

Roads inside of CLUPA G2616.

We are recommending some areas within [CLUPA G2616](#) for Conservation Reserve status. That designation lies outside of the scope of the forest management planning process (FMP). However, it does lie within the responsibilities of Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR), and this is a Crown FMU. **The Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA) makes it clear that the Minister shall not sign any FMP that is not sustainable for all forest values.** So, this draft FMP can, and should:

- Defer roads and harvesting wherever possible within those areas recommended for Conservation Reserve status.
- Wherever possible, any harvesting within these sensitive, valuable, and contentious areas should utilize access that is:
 1. As temporary as possible
 2. Winter roads/harvesting where possible
 3. As short-term harvest as is feasible, preferably in winter.
 4. Fully decommissioned and revegetated to remove linear features

Of particular importance for lowest possible grade, temporary (perhaps winter) roads are:

1. Kellar Road, and any proposed road near the north end of Caribou Lake.
2. Roads in or near the D'Alton Block
3. Roads near Hollingsworth or Campbell Lake
4. The Trail Lake Road anywhere west of Fawn/Doe Lakes.

These roads should be winter roads... or left just in the current state to keep open the possibility of increased formal protection of the caribou habitat and remote recreational experience.

A Sense of Wilderness

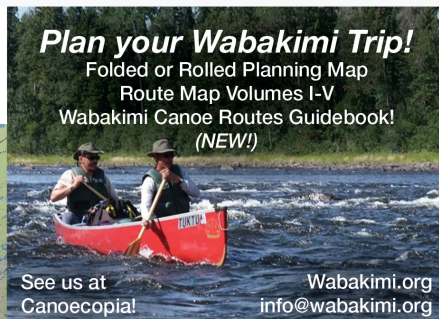
According to Vern Fish, FOW President, "Our goal is to maintain a sense of wilderness in key parts of this forest... Wabakimi has important values to be preserved. Our FOW priorities and concerns are:

- Ecological integrity and sustainability
 - Maintaining a healthy and sustainable woodland caribou population
 - Protect lakes that support Lake Trout
 - Protect exceptional recreation and tourism values adjacent to Wabakimi Park:
 - *Maintain existing and potential wilderness tourism business opportunities
 - *Preserve historical canoe routes that directly or indirectly connect to adjacent provincial parks.”
- “We do understand the need for economic benefit to Whitesand First Nation, and Armstrong. We believe that the - above recommendations are consistent with long term sustainability for both the natural environment and local economy.”

Thanks to our Business/Sponsor members



Join or Renew your FOW Membership Today!



Vision Statement

The Wabakimi Area shall be an exceptional wilderness recreation destination for the benefit of the present and future generation of visitors.

Mission Statement

Through volunteer stewardship and collaboration with other stakeholders, the Friends of Wabakimi will participate in the planning processes to advocate for protection and preservation of the diverse natural, cultural, recreational and historical resources of the Wabakimi Area.



Friends of Wabakimi

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