

FACT SHEET

CANADA'S SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Forest policies in Canada centre on the concept of sustainable forest management. Their underlying goal is to achieve a balance between the demands placed on our forests for products and benefits, and the maintenance of forest health and diversity.

Ninety-three percent of Canada's forests are publicly owned — 71 percent by the provinces and territories and 22 percent by the federal government. The remaining seven percent is privately owned. In some parts of the country, an increasing amount of forest is coming under Aboriginal jurisdiction as land issues are settled.

The provinces and territories manage their own natural resources, including forests, except on federal lands such as First Nations reserves and national parks. Each province and territory sets the policies, legislation and other regulatory matters for its own resources. The federal government's mandate includes managing the forests on its own lands, facilitating international trade in forest products, coordinating national healthy forests initiatives, increasing Aboriginal participation in forest management and harvesting, and meeting national and international reporting obligations.

The provincial, territorial and federal governments support sustainable forest management with an array of policies, laws and regulations that address matters such as land use planning, forest management,

public consultation, Aboriginal involvement, protected areas, biodiversity, access, licensing and harvest allocation, environmental assessment, endangered species, fishing and hunting, and forest fire prevention.

Canada's Forest Vision

In 2008, the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM) released a long-term strategic vision for Canada's forests that reaffirms the country's commitment to sustainable forest management. *A Vision for Canada's Forests: 2008 and Beyond* continues the leadership Canada has demonstrated for over 20 years through its previous forest strategies.

Like the strategies, the *Vision* is the result of a collaborative process which entailed more than a year of broad engagement with leaders of government, non-governmental organizations, Aboriginal groups, private woodlot owners, industry and academia. The *Vision* takes a broad, aspirational approach that is intentionally high level and non-prescriptive. It reflects the collective ambitions of Canadians for their forests and communities, and opens up an opportunity to share and draw on strengths and expertise.



A PROVEN TRACK RECORD

Canada has a proven record of sound forest stewardship, with more than 90 percent of its original forest cover remaining and a growing network of protected areas that represent the country's biological diversity.

In addition to confirming Canada's commitment to sustainable forest management, *A Vision for Canada's Forests: 2008 and Beyond* addresses two issues of emerging national importance — forest sector transformation and climate change. Both issues represent a challenge to the sector and its use of forest resources, and will require new and innovative approaches.

The *Vision*, posted at www.ccfm.org, allows for unique and innovative means of achieving the ultimate goal: to make Canada the best in the world in sustainable forest management and a global leader in forest sector innovation.

Canada's Leadership

Canada's role in supporting sustainable forest management extends far beyond its borders. As the first developed nation at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to sign the Convention on Biological Diversity, Canada followed through with its own national biodiversity strategy. After the release of this strategy, it developed a national regime to protect species at risk, which includes federal species-at-risk legislation and new habitat stewardship programs,

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and has added significantly to its network of protected areas. Some provinces have similar legislation and programs, and all provinces and territories have also adopted protected area strategies.

Canada participates in several United Nations forums, conventions and other initiatives that impact directly or indirectly on forests. One such forum is the United Nations Forum on Forests, established in October 2000 to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests. Another is the North American Forest Commission (NAFC), one of six regional forestry commissions under the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. The NAFC provides a policy and technical forum for Canada, Mexico and the United States to discuss and address forest issues on a North American basis.

The Canadian Forest Service of Natural Resources Canada champions Canadian forest interests and expertise in these and other international forums and deliberations, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, other federal departments and other interested parties such as industry, Aboriginal peoples and environmental groups.

Tracking Progress

Canada is a founding member of the Montréal Process, created in 1994 to develop and implement internationally agreed-upon criteria and indicators to assess and improve the conservation and sustainable management of temperate and boreal forests. These criteria are the forest

values that Canadians wish to sustain and enhance. They go beyond traditional timber values to include matters such as wildlife habitat, water quality, community stability, Aboriginal involvement, recreation and biodiversity. The indicators are scientific and use other factors to assess progress in achieving the criteria.

Criteria and indicators provide a framework for describing and measuring the state of Canada's forests, the values associated with them, forest management practices and progress in sustainable forest management. They are used to track changes and are a valuable tool for targeting research and formulating sustainable forest management policies. The six criteria are biological diversity, ecosystem condition and productivity, soil and water, global ecological cycles, economic and social benefits, and society's responsibility.

Several provinces, such as Ontario and Quebec, either have developed or are developing their own set of criteria and indicators for integration into their forest policies and legislation. Others, such as Newfoundland and Labrador, have incorporated CCFM criteria and indicators into their forest management planning processes.

Conclusion

Sustainable forest management is a clear priority and central policy focus of Canada's provincial, territorial and federal governments. As the concept of sustainable forest management shifts and adjusts to address changing circumstances and conditions, so, too, do the forest policies and other initiatives designed to achieve it.

COOPERATIVE FORESTRY LEADERSHIP

The Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM), made up of the 14 Ministers responsible for forests, is an important forum for the federal, provincial and territorial governments responsible for forests to work cooperatively to address major areas of common interest. The Council provides leadership on national and international issues and sets direction for the stewardship and sustainable management of Canada's forests. In Alberta, home to the boreal centre for bird conservation.