

Public Involvement in Forest Management

Public involvement is an important part of sustainable forest management in Ontario's Crown forests.

Public involvement includes participation in decision-making processes through local committees, providing input on the development of forest management plans, and First Nations consultation activities. At any time, the public may provide feedback about forest policy or operational procedures by contacting a Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) district office.

Advisory committees are an important part of providing direction and advice on forest policy and management in Ontario.

Provincial advisory committees assist MNR's reviews and revisions of Ontario's forest policy and legal framework. The Provincial Forest Policy Committee provides direct advice to the Minister of Natural Resources on forest policy. The Provincial Forest Technical Committee provides technical advice on MNR forest management guides.

Regional advisory committees represent a balance of regional concerns. Committee members are appointed to advise MNR regional directors on forest management planning. Members act as a "sounding board" for regional directors and the public on questions arising from regional level policy and planning and the implementation of other resource management and land use activities.

Members are encouraged to bring matters of regional interest to the regional director for discussion among committee members. Regional advisory committees are an important link to other committees including local citizens' committees and interest groups such as cottage associations. Regional advisory committees are a legal requirement under MNR's Forest Environmental Assessment approval.

Local citizen's committees are appointed to assist in preparing forest management plans across MNR's forest management planning area. These committees include people who live and work in the area or have a direct local interest in the plan. By participating in meetings and discussions, local citizens' committees influence the development of forest management plans. The public is notified at various stages of plan development and have the opportunity to review and comment on plan development and implementation.

Superior Forest Management Unit open house



local citizens involved in forest audit



MNR staff involved in public education



Natural. Valued. Protected.

Aboriginal Involvement

The Ministry of Natural Resources aims to work co-operatively with Aboriginal communities and the federal government to ensure a sustainable future for Aboriginal peoples. Through formal and informal consultation, MNR seeks to involve Aboriginal peoples and organizations in planning and implementing forestry operations.

The Forest Management Planning Manual for Ontario's Crown Forests outlines the requirements for involving Aboriginal communities in the forest management process.

Environmental Assessment

The Environmental Assessment Act promotes good environmental planning by evaluating the potential impacts of certain activities on the environment. This Act provides for the protection, conservation and wise management of the environment in Ontario.

MNR's Crown forest management in the Area of the Undertaking – an area consisting of 38.5 million hectares of Crown land south of 51 degrees north latitude – is bound by the 1994 Timber Management Class Environmental Assessment approval and the 2003 Forest Management Class Environmental Assessment approval.

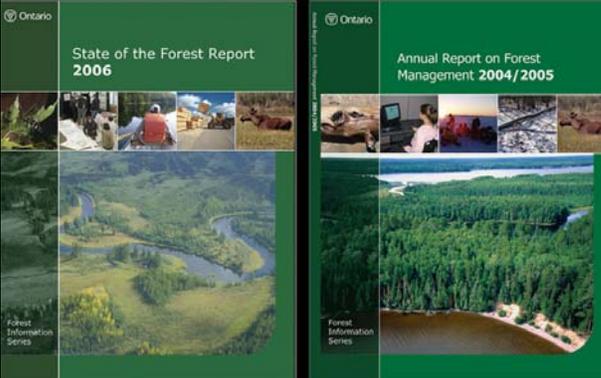
The Environmental Bill of Rights

The Environmental Bill of Rights recognizes that the Ontario government has the primary responsibility for protecting, conserving and restoring the natural environment. Every Ontarian has an active role in protecting and restoring the environment through the Environmental Bill of Rights.

The Environmental Bill of Rights makes the Ontario government accountable to the public through involving the public in government policy development and legislation changes.

Under the Environmental Bill of Rights, MNR is required to notify the public about proposed legislation, policies and regulations that could have a significant impact on the environment. All proposals that impact the environment are posted for public comment on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry.

The registry is an online bulletin board of important environmental decision-making proposals by Ontario government ministries. The registry provides an opportunity for public participation in environmental decision-making. MNR frequently uses the registry as part of its public consultation around forestry management. Public comments on the registry can be viewed by anyone and are taken into account before proposal decisions are made.



Public awareness and enquires

Each year MNR produces an Annual Report on Forest Management. The annual report informs the public on how well MNR is managing Ontario's Crown forests.

Every five years, MNR produces a State of the Forest Report based on a comprehensive and objective evaluation of sustainable forest management activities.

Both reports are tabled in the legislature and are available to the public. These reports are one more way that MNR remains accountable to the public.