

Population: 13,505,900 ¹

Area: 107,636,418 ha ²

Forests: 71,100,000 ha

Ownership/allocation of forested lands:

Public: 63,846,325 ha (90%)

Private: 7,224,445 ha (10%)

Public forest land subject to forest management agreements: 28,516,771 ha

Parks and protected areas: 6,419,161 ha

¹ [Statistics Canada, 2012](#)

² Source of all forest area information: Forest Resources of Ontario, 2011

³ Statistics Canada 2012. Trade data accessed via the World Trade Atlas, March 2013. Includes Harmonized System codes 44, 47 and 48.

1. Description:

The province of Ontario is located in the central portion of Canada and to the south, includes the Canadian portion of the Great Lakes. To the north, Ontario extends into the Arctic along the coastline of Hudson's Bay and James Bay.

Four major forest regions are represented in Ontario:

The Hudson Bay Lowlands is an expanse of wetlands with an area of 25.8 million hectares. Productive forest cover is less than 17 percent, and is typified by stunted tamarack (also known as larch) and black spruce growing along riverbanks and other well-drained areas.

The Boreal Forest occupies an area of 49.8 million hectares of the province. Black spruce comprises 50 percent of all tree species in the Boreal Forest by growing stock volume. Other boreal species include trembling aspen, white birch, jack pine and balsam fir.

The Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Forest region represents 25 percent of Ontario's actively managed public forest. Sugar maple, white pine, red pine, eastern white cedar, hemlock, tamarack, black spruce, white spruce, red oak, white oak, red maple, basswood, ash, poplar, yellow birch, and white birch are all present in this zone.

The Deciduous Forest is located in the southern-most part of Ontario. This region is home to more than 25 percent of Canada's population, yet it covers less than one percent of the country's land mass. The Deciduous Forest region has the greatest diversity of tree species in Ontario.

In 2012, Ontario's largest forest product export markets were the United States (94%), China (2%), Mexico (1%) and the European Union (1%). Total forest product export sales in 2012 were \$3.6 billion.³

2. Forest governance:

Public lands:

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) has the overall responsibility for the sustainable management of Ontario's public (Crown) forest lands and resources. Sustainable forest management provides for the long-term health of Ontario's forests while providing social, economic and environmental benefits to Ontarians. To achieve sustainable forest management, Ontario utilizes:

- a comprehensive system of legislation, regulations, policies, standards and guides
- a forest management planning system
- a compliance program and independent forest audits to monitor progress
- public reporting on the status of all aspects of forest management

Ontario's sustainable forest management practices are based on the most up-to-date science and are continuously reviewed and improved.

Ontario's managed Crown forests are divided into geographic planning areas, known as management units. Most of Ontario's management units are managed by forest companies on behalf of the MNR, under 20 year Sustainable Forest Licences (SFL). For other management units not licenced under SFLs, the MNR is responsible for the development of forest management plans and implementation of access, harvest, renewal and maintenance activities.

For management units managed under a SFL, the holder of the SFL is required to prepare forest management plans following the direction of the Forest Management Planning Manual which is regulated under the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act* (CFSA). The licensee is responsible for implementing forest management plans by carrying out access, harvest, renewal and maintenance activities. The SFL holder must follow the rules and guidelines set by the MNR to ensure sustainable forest management.

In addition to SFLs, MNR may issue shorter term (up to 10 years) Forest Resource Licences (FRL) to authorize specific harvest operations. FRLs may be issued on areas which overlap SFLs or on other management units managed by MNR. FRL holders are not responsible preparing forest management plans or reforestation but must follow the forest management plan approved by the MNR and must operate to ensure the long-term health of the forest. The SFL holder or MNR remain responsible for all aspects of planning and reforestation.

The protected area system in Ontario consists of over 600 protected areas, including provincial parks, conservation reserves, national parks, and wilderness areas. These areas comprise about 9.7% of the province, at present. All aspects of provincial park and protected area planning and management are carried out by the Ontario government agency called Ontario Parks.

Private lands:

Forest management on private land is not heavily regulated by the Government of Ontario. In some municipalities, municipal governments have passed tree cutting bylaws which may influence the harvest of timber on private lands. Otherwise, forest management is a voluntary activity on private land. To encourage good forest management, the Ontario government provides tax incentives to landowners who develop and commit to implement forest management plans.

In Ontario, theft of timber from private lands is a civil matter that is addressed by local police authorities and the legal system. To help prevent theft, all timber transport trucks carrying public wood are required to carry a bill of lading that indicates the origin of the load of timber. In addition, all mill facilities are required to document the volume and origin of wood as it enters the facility for processing. The MNRF has authority to verify the origin of all timber during transportation or at the mill yard.

3. Forest management legislation and regulations:

Public lands:

The MNRF is responsible for managing and protecting public (Crown) forest lands and resources in a sustainable manner for a wide range of benefits for both present and future generations. This commitment is the foundation of Ontario's forest policy and law, which includes a comprehensive system of legislation, regulations, policies, standards and guides directed to the achievement of sustainable forest management. Collectively these documents, referred to as Ontario's Forest Policy and Legal Framework, which enable the MNRF to:

- administer and regulate sustainable forest management planning and practices on Crown land through arrangements with its business partners;
- organize and manage the various policy directions written down in each document;
- ensure that policy directions are implemented through an array of programs and applied at appropriate geographic scales and/or MNRF administrative levels across the province to meet the needs of a broad base of business partners and clients on both Crown and private forest lands; and
- provide a solid foundation for sharing forest stewardship responsibilities with others through a variety of supportive arrangements on both Crown and private lands.

Strategic Policy:

The *Policy Framework for Sustainable Forests*, establishes Ontario's blueprint for the conservation and use of Ontario's forests, setting strategic direction and establishing the principles of forest sustainability.

Legislation:

The three principle statutes governing the management of Ontario's Crown forests are the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act (1994)*, the *Environmental Assessment Act (1990)*, and the *Environmental Bill of Rights (1993)*.

The *Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA)*, and its' regulations (*Ontario Regulation 167/95 General*, and *Ontario Regulation 160/04 Independent Forest Audits*) are based upon strategic direction outlined in the *Policy Framework for Sustainable Forests* and provide for the regulation of forest management planning, collection and reporting of forest management information, forest operations, compliance and enforcement, forest resource allocation and licensing, setting and payment of Crown charges, and independent forest audits.

Forest management on Crown lands in Ontario is also regulated by the *Environmental Assessment Act (EAA)*. The EAA applies to Ontario ministries and agencies, and sets out a planning and

decision-making process so that potential environmental effects are considered and mitigation measures identified before a project begins. As the management of Crown forests is a MNR responsibility, the activities of forest management are subject to the EAA. MNR has received authority under the EAA to carry out forest management activities within a defined area of the province (Area of the Undertaking) through *Declaration Orders MNR-75, MNR-71, and MNR-74*. These declaration orders contain conditions which outline the requirements for the planning process that must be followed when proposing forestry on Crown land to ensure that potential environmental effects and public and aboriginal input are considered before forestry operations begin.

All environmentally significant proposals (acts, regulations, policies, or instruments) including those associated with forest management, are subject to the *Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR)*. The purpose of the EBR is to protect, conserve and, where reasonable, restore the integrity of the environment; to provide sustainability of the environment; and, to protect the right to a healthful environment, by the means provided in the Act. The EBR establishes a number of rights for the public as well as obligations for prescribed ministries, including MNR, to help achieve the purposes of the EBR:

- Right to Review and Comment
- Right to Appeal Ministry Decisions and Applications for Review and Investigation
- Right to Sue for Environmental Harm
- Establishes the Environmental Commissioners Office to monitor compliance with the EBR and report to the legislature.

Forest Management Manuals:

The CFSA prescribes the development and use of four manuals to provide operational direction, technical standards, and define responsibilities of MNR and licensees in the management and use of Crown Forests.

The *Forest Management Planning Manual (FMPM)* provides direction for all aspects of forest management planning on designated management units in Ontario's Crown forests under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. The FMPM focuses on the delivery of the forest management component of provincial and regional land use and resource management policies and strategies, along with other local strategies, to provide the overall context for the preparation of Forest Management Plans, including the determination of forest sustainability. The forest management planning cycle is set out by the manual and consists of; planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting. This planning system includes evaluation of results and recommendations to be incorporated into a subsequent planning process to complete the cycle.

The *Forest Information Manual (FIM)* sets out mandatory requirements, standards, roles and responsibilities, timelines, and conditions for providing information in respect of Crown forests. The FIM also sets out the requirements for providing information required for forest management planning including; forest resources inventories, maps, forest operations inspections, forest values, and other information needed to be compliant with the CFSA and its regulations. FIM supports and complements the planning and operational requirements of the FMPM.

The Forest Operations and Silviculture Manual sets out the principles and accepted approaches for forest management, standards for forest operations and silvicultural practices, procedures for the evaluation of forest management in Ontario, and measures to assess performance of forest operations.

Forest management guides:

MNRF relies on a set of forest management guides to provide direction on acceptable forest management practices. This direction is used during the preparation and implementation of forest management plans, and takes the form of standards, guidelines and best management practices. The following list of sources are regularly reviewed and updated, see also the [MNRF's website](#).

- [Forest Management guide for Boreal Landscapes](#)
- [Forest Management Guide for Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest Landscapes](#) (Landscape Guide) (Boreal Landscape Guide) (anticipated release - 2013)
- [Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scales](#) (Stand and Site Guide)
- [Management Guidelines for Forestry and Resource-Based Tourism](#) (Tourism Guide)
- [Forest Management Guide for Cultural Heritage Values](#) (Cultural Heritage Values Guide)
- [Silvicultural Guide to Managing Southern Ontario Forests](#)
- [Forest Management Guide to Silviculture in the Great Lakes - St. Lawrence and Boreal Forests of Ontario](#)
- [Forest Compliance Handbook](#)
- [Using Forest Resources in Ontario](#)

Compliance monitoring, enforcement and penalties:

Ontario's forest operations compliance monitoring system is designed to ensure MNRF and forest industry conduct forest operations in compliance with legislation and in accordance with approved plans (e.g., forest management plans). It also ensures that forest management related statutes and regulations are interpreted consistently and enforced fairly but firmly in all cases of non-compliance. The forest compliance program is based on a partnership between MNRF and the forest industry, with a clear separation of roles and responsibilities. The industry role is one of "self-monitoring" wherein companies have responsibility for a comprehensive forest operations compliance program as a condition of their licence. This compliance program includes planning, monitoring (inspecting and reporting), training and education. The industry is required to report all suspected incidents of non-compliance on their management unit to MNRF. As the regulatory agency, MNRF retains full responsibility for administration and implementation of the CFSA which includes monitoring, auditing, determining compliance status, taking appropriate enforcement action and applying remedies when necessary.

Ontario has a comprehensive Independent Forest Audit process required by the CFSA. Independent forest audits strongly support and reinforce sustainable resource management in the province. Each management unit in Ontario is audited at least once every five years to ensure compliance with forestry legislation, license conditions, and to determine if planned forest management activities have been implemented as per the approved forest management plan. The audits provide assurance to the public that Ontario's Crown forests are being managed in accordance with the principles of sustainable forest management

Provincial Parks:

All aspects of park and protected area planning and management are carried out by the Ontario government through Ontario Parks and MNRF under the following legislation:

- [Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act](#)
- [Algonquin Forest Authority Act](#)

Private lands:

Provincial interest in forest stewardship on private lands is not administered to the same extent as forest stewardship on Crown lands and the provincial forest legislation discussed above does not directly apply to private land in Ontario. The Ontario government provides legislative support tools to assist with private land stewardship, protecting woodlands and trees in rural and urban areas, balancing land use decisions in designated conservation landscapes and establishing conservation easements. Two Ontario statutes, *The Forestry Act* and the *Municipal Act*, address forestry matters that may be applied to some private land.

In Ontario, a growing number of private forest landowners are adopting sustainable forest management practices with encouragement and support from public agencies such as:

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry;
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs;
- municipalities; and
- various non-government organizations such as local woodlot owners associations and the private sector.

Together, they work through a variety of cooperative and related efforts and incentives. The various types of cooperative and related efforts available for private forest landowners include information, education and skills training opportunities through complementary programs and incentives for promoting healthy forest ecosystems.

MNRF promotes healthy forest ecosystems on privately-owned forest lands through tax incentive programs for qualified landowners:

- [Ontario Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program](#)
- Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program

4. Timber processing legislation and regulations:

The measurement and tracking of harvested Crown timber is legislated in Ontario under the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act*, as set forward in the regulated Scaling Manual. This manual provides standard instructions for determining the quantity, quality and movement of Crown timber harvested in Ontario. This manual also provides direction on addressing wasteful practices, unauthorized hauling, and unauthorized harvesting.

The Scaling Manual defines standards for the training, licensing and approval of scalers and scaling auditors in Ontario. It also sets out the obligations of persons holding SFLs, FRLs, or receiving Crown timber, for the keeping of records, the completion of returns to the Ministry and other matters concerned with the measurement of Crown timber.

Forest resource processing facilities are regulated under the CFSA, which requires the licensing for all forest resource processing facilities (e.g. pulp and paper mills, sawmills) which consume more than 1,000 cubic metres of forest resources per year. A forest resource processing facility licence defines how a person can operate or construct a facility, increase the productive capacity of a facility or convert a facility to another type of facility. Before a facility licence can be issued, the Ontario government must be satisfied the facility has a sufficient supply of forest resources to operate.

Forest companies in Ontario pay Crown charges (stumpage) for every cubic meter of timber they harvest. Legislation governing the calculation of stumpage charges is contained within the *Crown Forest Sustainability Act*.

- [Timber Stumpage Charges](#)

Oversight for all operational activities, including timber harvesting and scaling is conducted by certified MNRF inspectors that are located at field offices throughout the province.

5. Other relevant legislation:

The following laws also govern forest management in the province:

- *Algonquin Forest Authority Act*
- *Professional Foresters Act*
- *Forestry Act*

6. Forest certification:

Forest certification is a tool for forestry organizations to have their forest management practices assessed to maintain access to consumer markets. The forest management practices are independently audited to a forest management standard that has been developed according to certain environmental, economic and social values. These standards are accredited independently of government and forest companies. This process requires applicants to demonstrate they are complying with or progressing towards those certification standards.

Forest companies in Ontario are encouraged to seek certification by independent third party organizations. The forest certification standards being considered by forest companies in Ontario, and accepted by the MNRF, are:

- The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Sustainable Forest Management Standard (SFM), approved by the Standards Council of Canada
- The two standards of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Principles and Criteria for Forest Management that are applicable to Ontario - Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Draft Standard and the National Boreal Standard; and,
- The SFI Inc.'s Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI).

The Ontario government's forest management standards are progressive and demanding. Forest companies are well positioned to meet the requirements of any forest certification standard or registration system.

7. Public engagement in forest management:

Public involvement is an important part of sustainable forest management for Ontario's Crown forests. The CFSA entrenches the requirement for public involvement in the development and implementation of forest through the requirement for Local Citizen's Committees (LCC) to be established by MNRF. In addition the CFSA specifies the Forest Management Planning Manual will include requirements for public involvement to be incorporated into planning processes. The FMPM contains detailed direction regarding public, involvement and consultation in forest management planning and implementation.

Through formal and informal consultation, MNRF seeks to involve Indigenous peoples and organizations in planning and implementing forestry operations. The FMPM outlines detailed direction and requirements for involving First Nation and Metis communities in the forest management process.

Public involvement is further entrenched through the Environmental Bill of Rights, which recognizes that the Ontario government has the primary responsibility for protecting, conserving and restoring the natural environment. 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, MNRF 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.