

Canadian Forestry Regulations and Standards

Canadian forestry operations are governed by a complex and continuously evolving regulatory framework based on multi-stakeholder consultation that varies with location and forest type. A set of federal legislation governs issues that span the nation, while most planning, harvesting, silviculture, water, species at risk, and conservation issues are regulated by the provincial governments. The company-specific management plans that are built to meet these regulatory requirements are supplemented with voluntary third-party certification of sustainable forest management practices.

FOUR DIFFERENT LAYERS OF REGULATION AND STANDARDS



FEDERAL LEGISLATION & REGULATION The Canadian forest sector must comply with a set of legislation and regulations at the federal level.



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CANADIAN ASSESSMENT

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACT

PEST CONTROL PRODUCTS ACT AND REGULATIONS

FERTILIZERS ACT AND REGULATIONS

PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION & REGULATION

Each province has a set of legislation, regulations, guidelines, and standards associated with forest management, which must be complied with.

| PROVINCE* | вс | AB | ѕк | МВ | ON |
|----------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| # ACTS [†] | 17 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 13 |
| # REGULATIONS [†] | 17 | 17 | 8 | 25 | 17 |
| PROVINCE* | QC | NB | NS | NL | |
| # ACTS [†] | 10 | 14 | 11 | 8 | |
| # REGULATIONS [†] | 21 | 15 | 19 | 17 | |

SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION There are three third-party-audited SFM certification systems in Canada, all of which are applied to lands across the country.

11,733,593[‡] CANADIAN STANDARDS ASSOCIATION (CSA)

46,342,312[‡] FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL (FSC)

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE (SFI)

119,014,836[‡]

COMPANY-SPECIFIC FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANNING Forest management companies in Canada must develop annual operating plans, along with longer-term management plans and all of these are approved by the provincial government.



*BC (British Columbia), AB (Alberta), SK (Saskatchewan), MB (Manitoba), ON (Ontario), QC (Quebec), NB (New Brunswick), NS (Nova Scotia), NL (Newfoundland and Labrador) **‡**as of May 2024 [†]including standards, guidelines, and codes of practice

INFORMATION TAKEN FROM:

NCASI. 2018. Species at risk assessment in Canada: A cross-jurisdictional review. Special Report No. 18-01. Research Triangle Park, NC: National Council for Air and Stream Improvement, Inc. FPAC. 2024. Certification Summary: 2023 Year-End Status Report Canada. Ottawa, ON: Forest Products Association of Canada. NRCan, 2020, The State of Canada's Forests; Annual Report 2019, Ottawa, ON; Natural Resources Canada,

NRCan. 1997. The State of Canada's Forests 1996-1997: Learning from history. Ottawa, ON: Natural Resources Canada.

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FEDERAL FORESTRY REGULATORY LANDSCAPE

The Canadian forestry regulatory landscape is defined by the designation of authority over lands and natural resources in the Canadian Constitution. Under the *Constitution Act* (1867 and 1982), the provinces have jurisdiction over natural resources including forestry-related operations. The exception is on federal lands such as First Nation reserve lands and national parks. Forestry operations on federal lands are governed by the *Forestry Act* (1985) and accompanying Timber Regulations. However, all forestry operations are bound by overarching federal legislation, which includes:



ASSESSMENT ACT

CANADIAN ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACT



REGULATIONS



The <u>Forestry Act, 1985</u> is concerned with forestry development and research in forests under federal jurisdiction (First Nations lands and national parks).

The <u>Species at Risk Act, 2002</u> (SARA) was created to protect Canada's wildlife species that are at risk of extirpation¹ or extinction² and to preserve Canada's natural heritage. In addition, SARA was created to meet Canada's commitment under the United Nations Convention on the Conservation of Biodiversity as ratified in 1992 and is a fundamental part of Canada's strategy to preserve biodiversity.

The <u>Migratory Birds Convention Act</u>, 1994 was created to implement a treaty between Canada and the US. The purpose of this Act and associated regulations is to protect and conserve migratory birds (as a population and individually) and their nests.

 Extirpation is defined as "wildlife species that no longer exist in the wild of Canada, but exist elsewhere" (s2).

2 Extinction is defined as wildlife species that are no longer present anywhere.

The <u>Fisheries Act</u>, <u>1985</u> is the primary piece of legislation in Canada concerning fisheries management. This statute concerns the managing of fish that are part of a commercial, recreational, or Aboriginal fishery, or fish that support such a fishery. The *Fisheries Act* influences forestry management of riparian streamside areas, particularly in the context of potential pollution and/or direct effects on fish habitat.

The <u>Impact Assessment Act, 2019</u> (IAA) governs the assessment of the effects a designated project may have on environment, health, social and economic conditions. The purpose of the IAA is to protect these aspects from adverse effects resulting from human activities, including applicable activities related to forest management.

The <u>Canadian Environmental Protection Act</u>, 1999 (CEPA) is concerned with protecting the environment and human health from the risk posed by pollutants. CEPA ensures that chemical substances are assessed to determine whether they meet the legislated criteria of a toxic substance, which therefore affects the chemicals that can be used in forest management as designated under the Pesticide Control Products Act of 2002.

The <u>Pest Control Products Act, 2002</u> is meant to avoid unacceptable risks to people and the environment by regulating pest control products. Pests have the potential to damage valuable agricultural and forestry products; therefore, pest control products are commonly used to prevent this damage.

The <u>Fertilizers Act, 1985</u> is designed to control the type of fertilizers available for agricultural operations. It is prohibited under this Act to sell or import a fertilizer or supplement unless it has been registered and conforms to Canadian standards.



FIGURE 1 | The Federal Forestry Regulatory Framework





British Columbia (BC) has the largest forest industry in Canada (NRCan 2020); therefore, it is not surprising that the regulatory environment for forestry in BC is extensive and complex. The primary law governing forestry in BC is the Forest Act, 1996 and its associated regulations. The Acts that most significantly influence environmental aspects associated with forestry in BC include:

The Environment and Land Use Act, 1996 enables the government to increase public awareness of the environment, and to ensure that environmental concerns are fully considered in land and resource development.

The Forest and Range Practices Act, 2002 outlines how all forest and range practices and resource-based activities are to be conducted on Crown land in BC, i.e., management plans, forest practices (e.g., roads, forest health, silviculture), resource protection, compliance, and enforcement.

endangered species, or unique natural phenomena in BC.

The Wildlife Act, 1996 is BC's primary wildlife protection and management legislation. It is against this Act to hunt, trap, take, wound, or harm wildlife that is listed as threatened or endangered on both public and private land in BC.

The Riparian Areas Protection Act, 1997 focuses on protection for fish in BC. The Act designates fish-bearing streams as "sensitive" streams for which long-term sustainability is at risk, and requires recovery plans for these streams.

The Water Sustainability Act, 2016 deals with the allocation of rights to, and the regulation of the use of, surface and ground water, including alteration or interfering with natural water courses.

The Forest Act, 1996 deals with forest use, administration and forest practices including the classification of forest lands, determination of annual harvest levels, allocation of harvesting, rights, forest roads, and log and wood residute.









The primary law regulating forest management in Alberta is the Forests Act. This Act provides the basis for Crown forest tenure in Alberta. The regulation of forest practices occurs predominantly through guidance documents such as the Alberta Forest Management Planning Standard and the Alberta Timber Harvest Planning and Operating Ground Rules Framework for Renewal. The Acts that most significantly influence environmental aspects associated with forestry in Alberta include:

The <u>Forests Act</u>, 2000, amended in 2020, provides the legal framework for forest management in Alberta. It gives the government the power to make policies and regulations governing logging methods, wood utilization standards, and other broader issues concerning the use of forest land, including timber quotas and forest management agreements.

The <u>Regulated Forest Management Profession Act, 2000</u> provides the basis for governing regulated forestry professionals

(RFPs) and registered professional forestry technicians (RPFTs) in Alberta.

The <u>Natural Resources Conservation Board Act, 2000</u> was created to provide an impartial review process for activities that may affect natural resources in Alberta, including social, economic, and environmental effects of an activity and whether the project is in the public's best interest.

The <u>Forest Reserves Act</u>, 2000 defines the process for the acquisition of land for a forest reserve. Forest reserves are set aside for the purpose of forest conservation and for the maintenance of optimum water supply conditions in forest reserves.

The <u>Forest and Prairie Protection Act</u>, 2000 is concerned with fire protection on public lands and gives government the authority to enact regulations regarding fire control or prevention measures.

The <u>Water Act, 2000</u> promotes and supports water conservation and management within Alberta, including the protection of water resources for the purpose of water use, water allocation, and penalties for violating the Act.

The <u>Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, 2000</u> (EPEA) is the primary environmental protection legislation in Alberta with the purpose of promoting and supporting the wise use, protection, and enhancement of the environment. It incorporates regulatory requirements for air, water, land, and biodiversity.

The <u>Wildlife Act, 2000</u> provides protection and conservation for wild animals on public and private lands in Alberta. It provides legislation relating to wildlife management as a whole addressing hunting and trapping of wildlife as well as the conservation of species at risk.



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Saskatchewan Forestry Regulatory Landscape



The following legislation serves to address most environmental aspects associated with forestry in Saskatchewan:

The <u>Forest Resources Management Act</u>, the <u>Forest</u> <u>Resources Management Regulations</u>, and the <u>Saskatchewan</u> <u>Environmental Code</u> provide the main legal framework for the sustainable management of SK's forest resources.

The <u>Forest Resources Management Act</u> serves to promote the sustainable use of forest land for the benefit of current and future generations by balancing the need for economic, social and cultural opportunities with the need to maintain and enhance the health of forest land.

The <u>Saskatchewan Environmental Code</u> (code) is a resultsbased regulatory approach to sustainable forest management that incorporates the required environmental outcomes within the regulations through a series of code chapters and standards that have been developed and established under the <u>Forest</u> <u>Resources Management (SK Environmental Code Adoption)</u> <u>Regulations</u>. The standards that have been implemented as part of the Natural Resources/Forestry Chapters include, but are not limited to, the Forest Inventory Standard, the Forest <u>Management Planning Standard</u>, and the <u>Forest Operating</u> Plan Standard.

The SK <u>Environmental Assessment Act</u> applies to forest management activities, which are considered a "development" project and warrant an environmental assessment. Conversely, the minister of Environment determines that a Forest Management Plan prepared by a licensee meets the requirements of the <u>Forest Resources Management Act</u> and sections 9 to 14 of The Environmental Assessment Act.

The <u>Forestry Professions Act</u> governs registered professional foresters and forest technologists and establishes the Association of SK Forestry Professionals.

The <u>Wildlife Act, 1998</u> regulates general wildlife management as well as wildlife protection. Under this Act, the government may classify native wild species at risk as extirpated, endangered, threatened, or vulnerable. Classified species at risk are protected from harm, harvest, disturbance, and interference unless the person holds a license or the action is approved and in agreement with a recovery plan.

The <u>Wildlife Habitat Protection Act</u> governs the protection and management of Crown lands for agricultural and wildlife purposes, and establishes a list of designated wildlife habitat and ecological lands that are to be managed and used, including for forestry purposes, as prescribed in regulation.

The <u>Natural Resources Act</u> applies to all renewable resources in SK, including forest resources. The Act obliges the government to conserve, develop, manage, and utilize parks and natural resources in a sustainable manner.

The <u>Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010</u> is concerned with protecting the environment from pollution and enhancing the quality of the environment. The Act contains provisions for the prevention of the discharge of pollutants into watercourses, the prevention of site contamination, and the management of drinking water and wastewater systems.









Forestry operations in Manitoba are guided by a number of forestry guidelines, standards, and manuals. The primary laws governing forestry in Manitoba are The Forest Act, 2011 and The Environment Act, 2012. Some forestry activities in Manitoba also require additional approval through the environmental assessment process under The Environment Act. The Acts that most significantly influence environmental aspects associated with forestry in Manitoba include:

The <u>Forest Act, 2011</u> is the primary regulatory tool governing forest management in Manitoba. It includes provisions governing forest tenure and administration, timber cutting rights, management of provincial forests, and prohibitions relating to Crown forests. The Forest Health Protection Act, 2009 is designed to protect the health of all trees and forests in Manitoba through preventing forest diseases and pests from entering the province, detecting and controlling forest diseases and pests within the province, and developing programs to protect and promote forest health in Manitoba.

The <u>Wildlife Act, 2010</u> provides general wildlife management provisions (i.e., hunting, trapping) for Manitoba. The Act gives the government the power to designate areas (e.g., wildlife refuges, wildlife management areas, special trapping areas) for wildlife management and conservation.

The Endangered Species and Ecosystems Act, 2013 is designed to protect and recover species or ecosystems at risk in Manitoba. The Act applies to both private and public land. Species listed as endangered, threatened, or extirpated are protected from harm or harassment, as are their habitats and any natural resources on which they depend.

The Environment Act, 2012 was created to develop and maintain an environmental protection and management system in Manitoba. The Act provides provisions for environmental assessments of projects likely to have significant effects on the environment.

The <u>Pesticides and Fertilizers Control Act, 2012</u> defines the licensing requirements for distribution and application of pesticides and fertilizers in Manitoba. Commercial application of pesticides, including forestry-related applications, requires a license.



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FIGURE 6 | Ontario Forestry Regulatory Framework. (Note that there may be other

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BC (British Columbia), AB (Alberta), SK (Saskatchewan), MB (Manitoba), ON (Ontario), QC (Quebec), NB (New Brunswick), NS (Nova Scotia), NL (Newfoundland and Labrador)

T MANAGEMENT CULTURAL HERIT VALUES

NAGEMENT FOR FORESTRY AND FOREST MANAGEMENT GUIDE FOR GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE LANDSCAPES

OREST MANAGEMENT GUIDE

IDE FOR CONSERVING IVERSITY AT THE STAND AND SITE SCALES







Quebec has the second-largest forest industry in Canada, behind BC (NRCan 2020). Its primary forestry law was revised to formally adopt an ecosystem-based management approach. The Acts that most significantly influence environmental aspects associated with forestry in Quebec include:

The <u>Sustainable Forest Development Act, 2013</u> is the primary law governing forest management in Quebec. The main purpose of the Act is to establish a forest regime designed to apply ecosystem-based management to sustainable forest development – that is, development that consists of ensuring the preservation of the biodiversity and viability of ecosystems by reducing the differences between developed and natural forests.

The <u>Forest Engineers Act</u>, 2008 defines the profession of forest engineers and the Ordre des ingénieurs forestiers du Québec, an association that manages the profession in the province of Quebec. The <u>Act Respecting the Conservation and Development of</u> <u>Wildlife, 2013</u> has the objective of conserving wildlife and their habitat while maintaining the principles of sustainable development. The legislation includes general wildlife provisions (i.e., hunting, rights of First Nations) and some provisions for species at risk. The Act provides a number of mechanisms for controlling or restricting activities on land for species protection.

The <u>Act Respecting Threatened or Vulnerable Species</u>, 2011 establishes a list of species at risk within Quebec. In addition, the government may determine and identify the features and characteristics defining the habitat for the designated species at risk. The Act contains a section specifically to protect threatened or vulnerable plant species from harvest and exploitation. It prohibits anyone from possessing, acquiring, or genetically manipulating a listed species.

The <u>Watercourses Act, 2011</u> addresses the management of water resources for energy, drinking, driving of timber, and flood prevention. The Act stipulates that the Minister may grant the right of use or lease, or may issue an occupation license for the beds or banks of a watercourse.

The <u>Environment Quality Act, 2013</u> is meant to protect the environment from the adverse effects of development. The Act lists measures to manage and protect water in Quebec, address climate change, address pollution of the atmosphere, and manage residual and hazardous materials. Under the Act, it is prohibited to undertake or allow the emission, deposition, or discharge of a contaminant exceeding regulated levels or concentrations into the environment.



legislation and/or regulation of relevance that have not been depicted here.)







The New Brunswick forestry regulatory environment is composed of a series of primary legislation and guidance documents to aid forest management. The primary law governing forestry in New Brunswick is the *Crown Lands and Forests Act*. The Acts that most significantly influence environmental aspects associated with forestry in New Brunswick include:

The <u>Crown Lands and Forests Act, 1980</u> is the primary law governing forest tenure in New Brunswick. The Act defines the government's authority over the harvesting and renewal of timber on Crown land. In addition, the Act describes the power of the government to acquire and dispose of Crown forest. The Act includes provisions on forest tenure, forest protection, roads, and abandonment of forest land.

The <u>New Brunswick Foresters Act, 2001</u> recognizes the previously established Association of Registered Professional

Foresters, and defines the objectives, powers, and administration of the Association, which governs Registered Professional Foresters in New Brunswick.

The <u>Natural Products Act, 1999</u> has authority over the development, conservation, and management of forest resources on private woodlots within the province. Under this Act, the government has the authority to implement and administer forest management programs on private woodlots.

The <u>Protected Natural Areas Act, 2003</u> is meant to preserve the natural biological diversity within New Brunswick by protecting, conserving, and managing lands that represent the natural diversity of the province and contain unique features or rare, endangered, or ecologically sensitive flora and fauna.

The <u>Species at Risk Act, 2012</u> provides for the recovery of wildlife species that are extirpated, endangered, or threatened due to human activities and aims to conserve species of special concern to prevent them from becoming listed under this Act. It is prohibited to kill, harm, harass, or take any individual that is listed as an extirpated, endangered, or threatened species.

The <u>Clean Water Act, 1989</u> concerns all matters relating to the protection of watercourses and potable water systems. The Act gives the government authority to control, reduce, and eliminate the rate of a contaminant's deposition into a watercourse.

The <u>Clean Environment Act, 1973</u> is concerned with protecting the environment from human activities. The Act prohibits the release of a contaminant into or upon the environment that could negatively affect the environment; endanger people, animal life, or plant life; or damage property unless in compliance with regulations.



legislation and/or regulation of relevance that have not been depicted here.)







Unlike in other provinces, private landowners dominate forestry in Nova Scotia and there are only a few large-scale Crown forest tenure holders. Therefore, the regulatory environment in Nova Scotia differs from that in other provinces. The Acts that most significantly influence environmental aspects associated with forestry in Nova Scotia include:

The <u>Forests Act, 1989</u> provides the basis for effective management of Crown lands and encourages the development of private lands while maintaining and enhancing non-economic resources (i.e., wildlife, water quality, and recreational opportunities). Regulations under this Act include those for forest fire protection, forest sustainability, and wildlife and watercourse protection.

The <u>Crown Lands Act, 1989</u> provides the basis for Crown forest tenure in Nova Scotia. The purpose and objectives of the Act are to facilitate effective use of Crown lands through the application of proven forest management techniques, the tenure of Crown

lands, the integration of wildlife and outdoor recreation into the forest management planning process, and the improved effectiveness of administration and management of Crown lands.

The *Foresters Association Act*, 1999 establishes the Registered Professional Foresters Association of Nova Scotia. The objectives of the association are to establish and maintain standards for the members of the association and to encourage and facilitate the knowledge, skills, proficiency, and competency of its members in the practice of professional forestry.

The <u>Environment Act, 1994-95</u> promotes and encourages the protection, enhancement, and prudent use of the environment in Nova Scotia. The Act includes sections on environmental education and research, environmental assessment, release of substances into the environment, the handling and use of dangerous goods and pesticides, the designation and management of contaminated sites, waste resource management, water resource management, air quality management, and related inspections.

The <u>Endangered Species Act</u>, 1998 is meant to protect and conserve species at risk of extirpation and extinction in Nova Scotia. The Act is intended to be based on the precautionary principle. Species at risk can be designated under the Act as vulnerable, threatened, endangered, extirpated, or extinct. Under the Act, it is prohibited to harm, kill, disturb, or take an endangered or threatened species at risk or its dwelling place.

The <u>Wildlife Act, 1989</u> aims to develop and implement policies and programs to maintain biodiversity; integrate appropriate protective measures into policies for use on Crown lands and in guidelines for forest management; regulate hunting, fishing, and trapping activities; and provide for the continued renewal of resources while managing for the optimum recreational and economic uses of land in Nova Scotia.









The province of Newfoundland and Labrador has two important Acts that provide the basis for laws governing forestry: the *Forestry Act* and the *Environmental Protection Act*. Forestry operations in Newfoundland and Labrador are required to go through an environmental assessment process for certain activities and for forest management plans. The Acts that most significantly influence environmental aspects associated with forestry in Newfoundland and Labrador include:

The <u>Forestry Act, 2009</u> is the primary piece of legislation governing forestry in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Act covers sections on Crown forest tenure, timber export, taxation, licensing of mills, forest protection, forest roads, and timber scaling. The <u>Foresters Act, 2011</u> establishes the Association of Registered Professional Foresters in Newfoundland and Labrador, which establishes and maintains standards of professional ethics for the members in the professional practice of forestry.

The <u>Environmental Protection Act</u>, 2002 incorporates requirements regarding environmental education and research, pollution control, waste disposal and litter, waste management, air quality management, contaminated sites, dangerous goods, pesticides, environmental assessment, approvals, and inspection and investigation. The purpose of the Act is to protect the environment from the possible harmful effects of development and resource management.

The <u>Forest Protection Act, 1990</u> establishes and provides the laws governing the Forest Protection Association. The objectives of this association are to develop and maintain forest conservation, education, and publicity programs designed to improve and perpetuate healthy forests in the province.

The <u>Water Resources Act, 2002</u> establishes legislative requirements concerning water rights, including the protection of water and wells, as well as provisions concerning the alteration or diversion of watercourses.

The <u>Endangered Species Act</u>, 2006 aims to protect species at risk of extinction and establishes laws with respect to recovering and managing these species. The Act gives the government authority to designate a species as vulnerable, threatened, endangered, extirpated, or extinct. Once a species is designated as a species at risk, a management plan, recovery team, and subsequent recovery plan are created for that species, based on the degree of designation.



FIGURE 10 | Newfoundland and Labrador Forestry Regulatory Framework. (Note that there may be other legislation and/or regulation of relevance that have not been depicted here.)



SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION



CSA

CANADIAN STANDARDS ASSOCIATION GROUP

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Group is an independent non-profit organization known for creating a diverse array of national standards for different industries and products in Canada. The CSA created a national standard to certify sustainably managed forested areas. This system requires continuous improvement of forest management practices and engagement of interested parties through a public participation process.

The requirements for the CSA standard are directly based on the CCFM SFM criteria and indicators. The general certification requirements under the CSA standard are:

- Compliance with relevant legislation
- Identification of appropriate values, objectives, indicators, and targets that clearly address the CCFM SFM criteria and CSA SFM elements in the standard
- Provision of continuous and meaningful public participation
- Achievement of, or progress
 towards, performance target
- towards, performance targets

 Continual improvement in
 performance

The principles of adaptive management are to be used throughout implementation of the CSA SFM system as well as in analyzing performance.

SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

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The Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to advancing sustainability through forestfocused collaborations, including certification. The SFI standard is based on a series of principles for SFM and is used across North America. The SFI principles are:



The Canadian government has developed, through the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM), <u>criteria</u> <u>and indicators</u> to assess progress towards SFM. The CCFM SFM criteria and indicators are consistent with other internationallyrecognized processes.

- Sustainable
- forestry Forest productivity and health
- Protection of water resources
- Protection of biological diversity
- Aesthetics and recreation
- Protection of special sites Legal compliance
- Research
- Training and
- Training and education
- Community involvement and social responsibility, and respect for Indigenous rights

Since the early 1990s, customers of forest products have sought independent assurance that the forests from which these products are sourced are managed sustainably. As a result, a number of systems and standards have been developed to measure or attest that forest companies are practicing sustainable forest management (SFM), resulting in a process called forest certification.

Achieving forest certification allows companies to provide third-party assurance that the forests under their management meet the requirements of a given standard or system. All three forest certification systems in use in Canada require adherence to relevant domestic laws and applicable tenure¹ arrangements, and recognition of Indigenous rights. Canada has the largest area of third-party certified forests in the world.

FSC

FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is a non-governmental non-profit international certification and labeling system that promotes environmental, social, and economically sound forest practices. The FSC forest certification system assesses whether forest operations are managing a defined forest area under the FSC forest management standards. FSC bases its certification process on 10 principles for responsible forest management:

- Compliance with laws and FSC principles
- Establishment of long-term tenure and user rights and responsibilities
- Recognition and respect for Indigenous peoples' rights
- Maintaining and enhancing community relations and
 - Ensuring diverse benefits from the forest
 - Assessment and mitigation of
 - environmental impact
 - Implementation of a management
 plan
 - Monitoring and assessmentMaintenance of high
 - conservation value forests
 Plantations as complementary to natural forests

Each principle is associated with a series of criteria that are further elaborated for different countries.

- Transparency
- Continual improvementResponsible fiber sourcing

SFI certification requires that forest management plans include long-term sustainable harvest levels and measures to avoid forest conversion or afforestation of ecologically important areas. Certification also requires investment in research, science, and technology, upon which sustainable forest management decisions are to be based.

- ©NCASI 2025
- 1 The right to harvest timber from Crown lands is subject to terms and conditions outlined in tenure agreements. These agreements (e.g., Forest Management Agreements) are legally binding contracts that precisely define the obligations and responsibilities of the government and the private user or tenure-holder (NRCan 1997).

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COMPANY-SPECIFIC FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Forest management companies in Canada must develop annual operating plans, along with longer-term management plans, all of which are approved by the provincial government. All plans and forest activities must be approved by government before any operations can occur, and all operations are subject to audits, compliance and enforcement, and potential penalties and/or fines if the actions are found to be out of compliance. Provincial governments have Constitutional authority over forest resources, including their development, conservation, and management. Forest management planning undertaken by individual companies incorporates measures to address regulatory requirements at the federal and provincial levels, along with meeting obligations under voluntary third-party sustainable forest management certification programs.



The planning horizon for forest management in Canada is typically on a 100- or 200-year timeframe. For many Canadian forests, 100 years represents one forest rotation (growth cycle). Each province has its own system for undertaking these long-term plans, but in all cases the government works closely with industry and the public in their development. Consultation with Indigenous communities is required. Independent external experts may also be directly involved in the process. Plans incorporate detailed analyses regarding forest harvest, growth, yield, and regeneration. A number of provincial governments have shifted towards designing forest management approaches that mimic natural forest conditions that are affected by disturbances such as fire and insects. An overarching principle harnessed in forest management planning is that of adaptive management—an iterative process in which the uncertainty in decision making is reduced over time through the knowledge gained from monitoring the effects of previous management decisions.



Forest Management Agreements (FMAs) or licenses are long-term (typically 20- to 25-year), renewable arrangements for forest tenure¹, where a company is granted harvesting rights in exchange for managing the forests in a responsible manner and paying a fee ("stumpage") for the wood removed. Through these agreements, forest companies are granted the right to harvest timber in accordance with a defined level of "annual allowable cut" approved by each provincial government. FMAs/licenses are government driven and are aligned with broader landscape-level planning objectives for the province in question. Forest tenures include requirements for managing the forest for a broad set of values that goes beyond timber production and includes social, economic, and environmental factors (e.g., watershed and wetland protection, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, long-term stability of forest ecosystems, and recreation), as well as cumulative effects.

5 YEAR PLANNING HORIZON

Forest Management Plans (FMPs) or Forest Stewardship Plans (FSPs) are typically developed every 5 or 10 years (but can be up to 25 years) to provide a strategic vision and commitment to conserving forest values within the context of the longer-term FMA or license. An FMP/FSP outlines forest management objectives and strategies, including consideration for Indigenous rights, recognition of ecosystem services, as well as public input and consultation. FMPs/FSPs must be available for public review and must not infringe on Indigenous community requirements. Many provinces require that FMPs/FSPs be established based on regulations or regulatory guidance manuals. Most provinces also require sign-off by a registered professional forester. Independent audits are a component of many provincial regulatory compliance programs and are required to achieve Sustainable Forest Management certification.



ANNUAL **OPERATING PLAN**

Annual Operating Plans (AOPs) or annual site plans typically define aspects such as planning, harvesting, and reforestation activities, as well as harvesting block and road building schedules for the year of activity. These annual plans incorporate highly detailed information associated with designing harvesting blocks in a manner that complies with regulations associated with maintaining riparian areas alongside waterbodies, and identifying and maintaining habitat for species at risk and other wildlife. Forestry companies are also required to submit formal reports on their activities, and FMAs/licenses and FMPs/FSPs may be updated as a result. AOPs are subject to provincial monitoring and inspection to ensure compliance. A failure to comply with provincial or federal policy and regulations can lead to significant penalties, including fines, suspension of harvesting rights, or seizure of timber.

1 The right to harvest timber from Crown lands is subject to terms and conditions outlined in tenure agreements. These agreements (e.g., Forest Management Agreements) are legally binding contracts that precisely define the obligations and responsibilities of the government and the private user or tenure-holder (NRCan 1997).