

## FACT SHEET

# INTEGRATED FOREST LAND-USE PLANNING

As a leader in sustainable forest management, Canada constantly seeks new approaches to maintaining the health and productivity of its forest. An evolving concept increasingly being applied across the country is integrated land use planning.

Integrated land-use planning tries to balance the economic, social and cultural opportunities in a forested area while maintaining the well-being of the forest. In this process all interested parties, large and small, come together to make decisions about how the land and its resources should be managed.

This type of broad-based collaboration is critical to Canada's system of forests, where about half of the land remains unallocated to industry interest or protected areas, a situation which is likely to change in the coming years as land is increasingly allocated for specific uses.

Integrated land-use planning may also prove valuable in areas that have already been allocated, as these development rights may have to be reconciled with important emerging demands such as expanding cities, Aboriginal land claims and conservation.

Achieving agreement now will help ensure our forests are sustainably managed for current and future generations.

Applying integrated land-use planning in Canada's forests is a complex task.

It must take place within the country's unique forest ownership and tenure mosaic; address the needs of users large and small; weigh-in the important noneconomic values that Canadians associate with their forests; and, maintain and enhance the health of the forest.

### Canada's Unique Ownership and Management Mosaic

About 93 per cent of Canada's forest is owned by provincial, territorial or the federal government. Canada's provinces and territories are responsible for the management of natural resources, including forests. They have exclusive powers to develop and enforce their legislation, standards and programs to ensure the development, conservation and management of forest resources.

The federal government is responsible for its international trade in forest products and the management of



### The Importance of Planning

Sustainable forestry requires good planning and good planning starts with a strategy. An integrated land use plan serves as the backdrop for the allocation and wise use of the resources in a particular area of forest, and for the conservation of the area's ecological integrity.

federal lands and federal parks. They are also responsible for Aboriginal Affairs.

The provincial and territorial governments enter into agreements with logging companies to enable them to operate in the territory in exchange for certain obligations. Forest companies with long-term forest licences pay cutting fees to the appropriate provincial/territorial government, and produce plans to carry out sustainable management in return for harvesting timber. These management plans must be submitted for approval by ministers responsible for forests before harvesting may take place. The plans, updated regularly, detail how forest values will be conserved, and identify on a map the areas to be harvested. Integrated land-use planning provide a way to address the issues that arise from this ownership and management mosaic.

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### Multiple Voices, Multiple Benefits

The many economic activities that take place in Canada's forests are an important part of the planning process. This vast expanse of woodland—covering about 40 per cent the country's landmass— supports some of Canada's most important industries. While forestry is the main industry in many regions, it often vies with other economic activities for use of the same tract of land. The other activities include large-scale industries such as hydroelectric development, mining, and oil and gas extraction, and smaller operations such as hunting, trapping, fishing, tourism, and non-timber forest products.

At the same time, millions of Canadians look to the forest for other benefits—aesthetic, environmental, cultural, historical, recreational and spiritual—that weave into the national fabric. Among the voices speaking for these values are communities, Aboriginal peoples, environmental groups, private woodlot owners, academics, park supporters, recreational groups and the general public.

### Achieving the Vision, Meeting the Challenge

The vision that Canadians have for their national forest is clear—they want the forest's long-term health to be maintained and enhanced for the benefit of all living things and for the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of all Canadians, now and in the future.

Achieving the cooperation and consensus of multiple stakeholders with often conflicting needs is a



challenging task. The task takes on added complexity when the wellbeing of the forest is the primary consideration. Integrated land-use planning is an approach that is proving successful in meeting this challenge and in achieving the vision that Canadians embrace for their forests.

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### Integrated Land Management and the Woodland Caribou

Considering all values in landscape planning and management is especially important in areas that shelter species at risk, such as the woodland caribou. In west-central Alberta, the Foothills Research Institute's Woodland Caribou Program has brought together local forest operators, oil and gas companies, governments and First Nations to develop a coordinated plan to conserve the habitat of the area's caribou herds. Research results are used in forest management planning and timber harvest projections.

### Provincial Land Use Frameworks

As leading players in the management of Canada's forest resources, most provincial governments have introduced land-use frameworks to address the sometimes competing interest of diverse stakeholders. For instance, Alberta's Land-use Framework, enshrined in the Alberta Land Stewardship Act proclaimed in 2009, is a comprehensive strategy to better manage public and private lands and natural resources such as forests to achieve Alberta's long term economic, environmental and social goals.