

OLD-GROWTH FORESTS

NATURAL DIVERSITY ACROSS CANADA



Old-growth forests play unique ecological, cultural and spiritual roles. Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC) members are committed to maintaining and conserving these forests, which is why they go above and beyond the world's strictest forestry regulations to ensure a healthy mix of tree ages are maintained where they operate.

DEFINING OLD GROWTH:

Old-growth forests come in many forms, and there is no one all-encompassing definition, partly because different forests naturally live to different ages, making old growth a relative term. In general, old-growth forests are characterized by one or more of the following structural aspects: the presence of old trees, a significant amount of large diameter coarse woody debris and a complex horizontal and vertical structure.

How humans interact with old-growth forests is another element in how people define them. The United Nations says that old growth forests may or may not have been disturbed by humans. Others argue that a forest must be relatively undisturbed, naturally regenerated, and dominated by a range of indigenous tree species to qualify as old growth.

Understanding a forest's life cycle is key to defining old-growth forests. In broad terms, a forest's lifecycle can be broken into three stages. Stage one is referred to as a young or open forest, which is seen after a disturbance like fire. A middle-aged forest features a dense canopy of trees after weaker trees have been outgrown. Old growth forests have larger trees and a more complex structure that includes smaller trees and fallen logs and other debris on the forest floor.

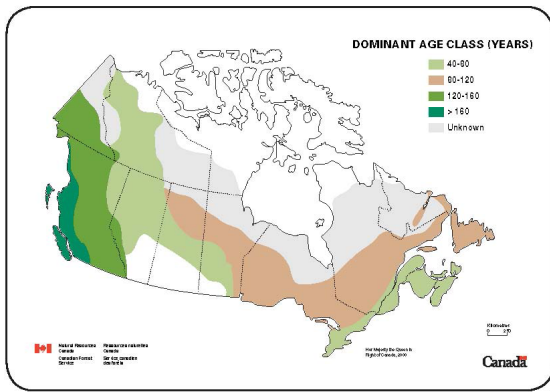
FOREST DIVERSITY:

While old growth is often seen as a forest's end point, in reality it is just one stage in the life cycle. Forests of different ages support different plants and animals, making the disturbance and renewal of old-growth trees and stands an essential part of the maintenance of biodiversity and ecosystem function. Stands in all stages of their life cycle, featuring a diversity of tree ages, are necessary to ensure the long-term existence of our forests and for the maintenance of biodiversity.

MANAGING OLD-GROWTH FORESTS SUSTAINABLY

Within each province, areas of old growth of each forest type are set aside. Within harvestable areas, foresters retain a threshold level of old-growth stands. Other younger areas are retained to ensure a steady stream of forests will continue to reach old-growth ages as existing old growth is disturbed or replaced.

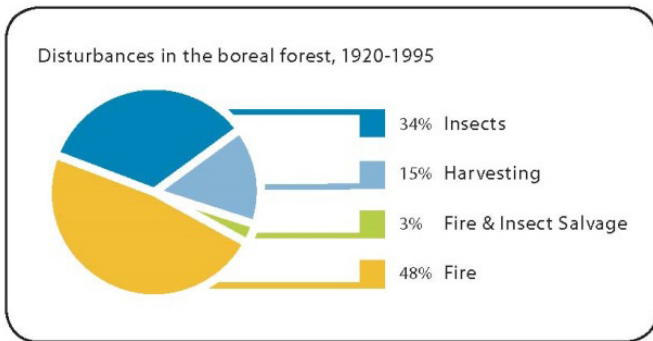
Canada has millions of hectares of older and mature forests. These forests are not disappearing, nor is our original forest area. More than half of Canada's forest area consists of a large intact landscape that has not been subject to harvesting. Only half of Canada's forests and other wooded area are managed for commercial use. Of this managed forest, less than 1% is harvested annually. By law, all harvested areas must be promptly regenerated.



Most of Canada's boreal forest is about 100 years old

Canada is also one of the few forest nations that retains nearly 90% of its original forest cover. This was achieved while still supporting a strong forest sector for over 100 years.

The Canadian forest industry knows that certain forests carry special conservation significance for a variety of reasons — environmental, social, or economic. They may be forests with a significant biological, cultural or heritage value. Industry believes that such forests require special management approaches.



Since 1920, more than 80% of the disturbances in the boreal forest were caused by fire and insects.

FOREST MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION PLAYS A KEY ROLE

Independent forest certification provides a stamp of approval showing customers they are buying products from forests managed to comprehensive environmental, social, and economic standards.

A certificate is issued only after a thorough review by third-party auditors determines, among other things, that long-term harvests are sustainable, there is no unauthorized or illegal logging, wildlife habitat is preserved, and soil quality is maintained.

Canadian forest managers certify their lands to forest management standards offered under three internationally recognized programs: Canadian Standards Association (CSA), Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). All three set high thresholds that forest companies must clear, above and beyond Canada's tough regulatory requirements.

Canada has the largest area of forests that are third-party independently certified in the world, more than 160 million hectares. As of 2014, only about 10% of the world's forests were certified. But of that 10%, Canada had almost half (43%).

The tremendous growth of certified forests in Canada is due, in part, to the commitment of FPAC member companies to become certified.

THE CANADIAN BOREAL FOREST AGREEMENT (CBFA)

The CBFA is the world's largest conservation initiative. Included among the current signatories are FPAC, its 18 member companies and seven leading Canadian environmental non-government organizations.

The CBFA is one more way FPAC members are ensuring that their rigorous forest management plans adhere to the highest standards of forest governance and certification. One of the CBFA goals is to implement world-leading sustainable forest management practices based on the principles of ecosystem-based management. To achieve this goal, it is essential to ensure a healthy mix of tree ages, including old-growth forests.

FPAC's goal is for our conservation partnerships and alliances to become the norm in Canada, and for these partnerships to ensure that Canada's forest resources are maintained for future generations.



FPAC advocates on behalf of the forest sector. FPAC is also working to realize the ambitious goals of Vision2020 to help the industry transform with innovative new products, diversified markets, enhanced environmental credentials and a skilled workforce. FPAC is proud to represent Canada's largest producers of forest products.

All FPAC members are signatories of the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement. Our members are responsible for 66% of certified forest lands in Canada. Third-party certification of member companies' forest practices is a condition of membership in the Association — a world first.