

Handbook for getting involved in forest management on Crown lands in Ontario

February 2021

**Policy Division
Crown Forest and Land
Policy Branch**

Policy Division
Crown Forest and Land
Policy Branch

© Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2021

Publications and price lists are available from this office:

Service Ontario Publications

300 Water Street

Peterborough, ON, K9J 8M5

1-800-668-9938

<http://www.serviceontario.ca/publications>

Telephone inquiries should be directed to the Service Ontario Contact Centre:

General inquiry: 1-800-668-9938

Renseignements en Français: 1-800-667-1840

Fax (705) 755-1677

How to cite this document: OMNRF. February 2021. Handbook for Getting Involved in Forest Management on Crown Lands in Ontario. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario. 56 pp

ISBN 978-1-4868-4522-4 Print

ISBN 978-1-4868-4523-1 PDF

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Overview of forest management.....	2
Information on the forest management planning process.....	5
How to get Involved in forest management planning	8
Issue resolution in forest management planning	15
Public involvement in preparing a forest management plan	17
Public involvement in maintaining a forest management plan.....	27
Public involvement in implementing a forest management plan	33
First Nation and Métis community involvement.....	41
Contingency plans.....	47
Involvement opportunities in independent forest audits.....	50
Involvement opportunities in forest policy	51
Reporting on forest operations.....	52

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Management Units in Ontario 2021.....	3
Figure 2: Forest management planning schedule	12
Figure 3: Timeline for annual work schedules	33

Introduction

The content of this handbook is intended to assist the public, forest workers, Indigenous peoples and others to gain a clear understanding of how you can help manage forests on Crown lands in Ontario and how you can get information to support your involvement. It includes information on forest management planning and operations, policy and administration. Information specifically related to opportunities for First Nation and Métis Community involvement in forest management is set out below starting at page 42.

Every attempt has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information presented. It should be noted that this document is not intended to interpret rules relating to forest management planning and operations, nor does it create any new or additional policy or administrative requirements.

Overview of forest management

What is forest management?

Forest management is the use of forestry principles, policies, practices and business techniques to achieve sustainable environmental, social and economic benefits from a forest over time.

Forest management includes the activities of:

- building and maintaining of access roads into the forest
- harvesting of trees
- [renewal and tending of the forest](#)
- preparing forest management plans (FMPs) that enable these activities

Why is forest management important?

Ontario's Crown forests provide social, economic and environmental benefits for present and future generations. Managing the health and sustainability of Crown forests is the responsibility of Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), the forest industry, Indigenous peoples, and the public. MNRF must consider the opinions of all Ontarians in making forest management decisions.

Where does forest management occur on Crown lands in Ontario?

Forest management occurs throughout a large portion of central and northern Ontario as shown in Figure 1. This area is further broken down into geographical planning areas called management units and forest management plans (FMPs) are written for these management units.

Figure 1: Management Units in Ontario 2021



What are the requirements forest management must follow in Ontario?

There are laws and policies in Ontario to ensure the sustainable management and use of Crown forests. Ontario's forest policy framework is globally recognized for its effective management of Crown forests. It is a robust system, rooted in best

available science, and founded on an adaptive management approach of planning, implementing, monitoring and re-planning based on performance and the evaluation of new information, science, and traditional knowledge.

The foundation of the forest policy framework is the Crown Forest Sustainability Act that provides for the sustainable management of Crown forests in a manner that must have regard for plant and animal life, including species at risk, water, soil, air and social and economic values.

Learn more about forest [legislation, policies, manuals and guidelines](#).

Information on the forest management planning process

How are Crown forests managed?

Crown forests are managed through the preparation and implementation of Forest Management Plans (FMPs). These plans ensure the province's Crown forests remain healthy and provide benefits such as timber and other commercial products, wildlife and species at risk habitat, and recreation opportunities. A FMP is prepared for each of Ontario's management units.

What is a management unit?

Ontario's Crown forests are divided into geographic planning areas known as management units. Management units have local names such as the Algoma Forest, Nipissing Forest or the Red Lake Forest. Most of these management units are managed by the forest industry under sustainable forest licences. Sustainable forest licence holders are responsible for forest management planning and forest operations (i.e., access road construction, harvest, renewal) subject to the requirements of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act.

The Crown, or a designated company, is responsible for preparing and implementing a FMP for management units that are not managed by sustainable forest licence holders. Regardless of who prepares the FMP, MNRF is responsible for approving them.

You can visit the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#) to view a map of all management units and the current status of the FMP for each unit.

What is a forest management plan?

A FMP outlines the objectives over a ten-year period for a management unit and what forest operations may be completed over that time to achieve those objectives. There must be an approved FMP before any forest operations can take place in a management unit.

What guides the preparation and implementation of a forest management plan?

There are three manuals that provide direction for the preparation and implementation of forest management plans. Each manual contains technical direction and a glossary of the technical terms used. The manuals include:

1. The [Forest Management Planning Manual](#) is the primary document that guides the preparation of a forest management plan for a management unit.
2. The [Forest Operations and Silviculture Manual](#) sets out the principles and accepted approaches for forest management, the standards for forest operations and [silvicultural practices](#), the minimum qualifications for forestry workers, and the procedures for the evaluation of forest management in Ontario.
3. The [Forest Information Manual](#) provides direction for the exchange of forest management information between MNR and the forest industry. It describes what information is required for forest management planning and the preparation and delivery of forest resources inventories, maps, forest operations inspections, forest values, and base data.

How is a forest management plan implemented?

Annual work schedules direct the implementation of a FMP over its ten-year period. Forest operations must be reported every year in annual reports.

The following forest management activities can only occur on Crown lands if an approved FMP, and annual work schedule are in place:

- roads can be built and maintained to provide access to the forest
- roads can be decommissioned when they are no longer needed
- trees can be harvested for lumber, paper or other products
- tree planting and seeding can occur to renew the forest
- young trees can be tended to keep them growing well

Who prepares a forest management plan?

A FMP is prepared by a plan author who is a registered professional forester in Ontario under the Professional Foresters Act. The plan author is assisted by a planning team and a local citizens' committee. The planning team includes representatives from MNRF, the forest industry, the local citizens' committee, and First Nation and Métis communities. Once the FMP has been prepared and is ready for approval, the plan author will certify that it provides for the sustainability of the Crown forest and submit it to the MNRF for approval by the MNRF regional director.

How to get Involved in forest management planning

Why is the MNRF asking for my involvement?

The MNRF wants to understand your interest in forest management so it can make informed and balanced decisions. MNRF and forest industry will ask for your input at key times as part of consultation processes associated with forest management planning.

How will I know that a consultation process is underway?

When the MNRF holds consultations for a FMP, it notifies the public through some or all of the following:

- direct mail or email
- notices posted in local media (e.g. newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media)
- notices posted on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#)

You will find more information about consultation in the forest management planning and forest policy sections of this document.

How can I get involved or provide input on a forest management plan or policy?

During the development of FMPs or other forest management policy you can get involved by:

- **Calling or emailing the MNRF or the forest industry contacts** identified in the notices to get information or discuss a particular interest or concern you may have.
- **Getting informed** - visit the Natural Resources Information Portal to find your area of interest and review the forest management information provided ([Forest Management Plans Online](#))

- **Attending information forums (e.g. open houses)** identified in the notice where information may be displayed in maps, documents and tables. Representatives will be available to answer questions and discuss any concerns you have about the FMP or project. You can submit written comments at the information forum.
- **Becoming a member of a local citizens' committee** to provide advice to the MNRF district manager and the planning team on the development of a FMP. Members typically include people with an interest in forest management such as trappers, tourism operators, hunters and anglers, First Nation and Métis peoples and other stakeholders.

What is the Natural Resources Information Portal?

The Natural Resources Information Portal is a website that supports your involvement in forest management by providing access to draft and approved FMPs prepared for management units in Ontario. Forest management plan notices are posted here to support your understanding of where in Ontario FMPs are being developed and enable your review and submission of comments. Natural Resources Information Portal - Forest Management Plans Online.

What is the role of the local citizens' committee in forest management planning?

The local citizens' committee's main role is to represent the interests of the public and Indigenous peoples by providing advice to the MNRF district manager and the planning team during the development and implementation of the FMP.

You can request a meeting with a member of the committee at any time during the planning process to discuss the FMP or for assistance with the forest management planning process.

What does the MNRF do with the comments I provide?

MNRF considers all comments from the public, First Nation and Métis communities, and stakeholders during the FMP or policy development processes. You can review the information that has supported the development of the FMP on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#) to see how comments were considered.

When can I get involved in the preparation of a forest management plan?

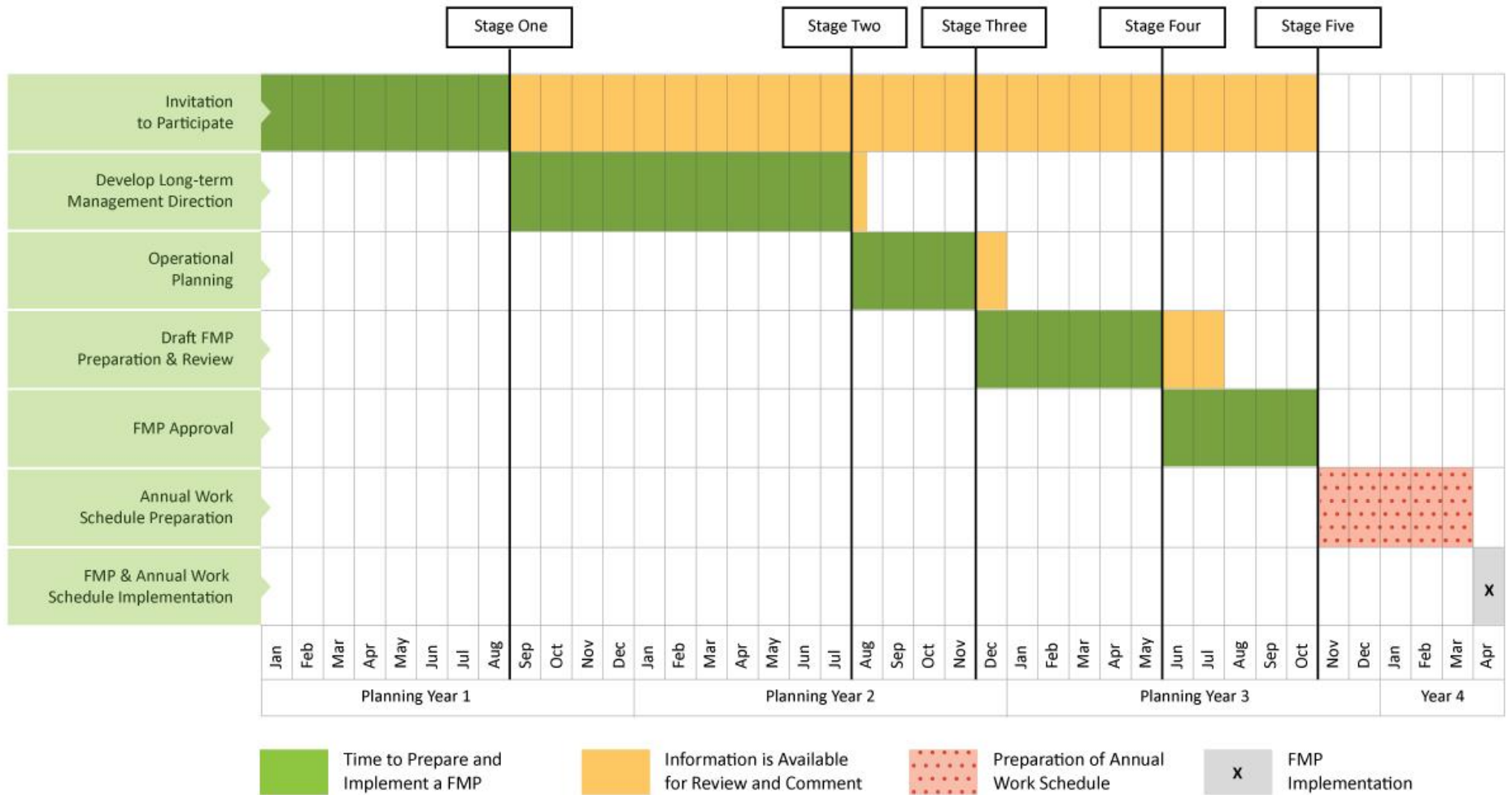
There are five stages of consultation involved with preparing and approving a FMP. At the beginning of each of the five consultation stages, public notices are provided and may include direct written notices (e.g. letter, email), media notices (e.g. newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media) and notices posted on the Natural Resources Information Portal. The notices will tell you if a FMP is being prepared and the stage of plan development. There are five stages of consultation in preparing a forest management plan. Those stages are described in more detail later in this handbook and include:

- [Stage One – Invitation to Participate](#)
- [Stage Two – Review of the Proposed Long-Term Management Direction](#)
- [Stage Three – Review of Proposed Operations](#)
- [Stage Four – Review of Draft Forest Management Plan](#)
- [Stage Five – Inspection of Approved Forest Management Plan](#)

How long does it take to prepare a forest management plan?

It takes approximately three years to complete a forest management plan. Figure 2 provides an overview of a forest management planning schedule and identifies the timeline for each of the five stages of FMP development.

Figure 2: Forest management planning schedule



How can I get involved in the preparation of a forest management plan?

Public and Indigenous input is an important part of the forest management planning process. The planning team wants to hear from people and organizations who are interested in, and affected by, forest operations.

Here are some ways you can find out about and get involved with FMPs. You can:

- visit the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#) and review the notices to see what FMPs are being prepared that interest you
- review the current FMP for background information
- look for notices posted in media (e.g. newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media) for each stage of consultation and make note of the key MNRF and Sustainable Forest License contacts
- contact your local MNRF office and ask to be included on the FMP mailing list
- arrange a meeting with MNRF staff, the plan author, or a representative of the local citizens' committee
- participate in information forum(s) to speak with members of the planning team or local citizens' committee. You can also submit comments at the information forum
- write a letter to the plan author or the [local MNRF office](#) to identify your interests related to the FMP

Are there other forest management planning or implementation processes and documents that I can get involved in or view?

Public and Indigenous input is an important part of forest management planning and implementation. In addition to the opportunities to get involved in the preparation of a FMP, you have opportunities to get involved in the preparation of a:

- [Contingency Plan](#) – an interim FMP that may range from one to three year and is intended to permit the implementation of operations between the expiry of the current FMP and the approval of the next FMP
- [Forest management plan extension](#) – provides opportunity to add more time to the period of a FMP, where approved operations remain to be carried out, so the plan can continue to be implemented
- [Forest management plan amendment](#) – a change that may be needed during the implementation of a FMP
- [Insect pest management program](#) – a planning process MNRF completes to determine the types and locations of operations that are required to remove or control an insect pest

You also can view:

- [Annual work schedule](#) – identifies forest operations from the approved FMP that are scheduled to be implemented during a specific year
- [Prescribed burn plan](#) – identifies areas on the management unit where fire will be used to help manage the forest
- [Annual aerial herbicide and insecticide programs](#) – identifies specific areas on the management unit where the applications of herbicides by an aircraft will be used to control vegetation that might compete with trees growing on a site after it has been harvested or the application of insecticides to control pests within the management unit

Issue resolution in forest management planning

What if I have a concern that hasn't been resolved?

Sometimes the plan author or planning team are unable to address a concern you have brought forward to them to your satisfaction during the preparation of:

- a FMP
- a FMP amendment (minor, major or long-term management direction)
- a contingency plan
- an insect pest management program

When that happens, you can start a formal issue resolution process by submitting a request in writing to MNRF. In your request you should identify:

- your issue(s)
- if your issue(s) relates to the long-term management direction or proposed operations of the FMP and include the location of the forest operations of concern
- facts or evidence you have gathered to support your issue(s)
- a proposed solution

What does MNRF do with my request?

Upon receipt of your request, MNRF will review it to ensure the issue is within the scope of the FMP issue resolution. Issues whose resolution is not within the scope and which will not be considered by MNRF include:

- matters outside MNRF's mandate;
- Crown land use planning; or
- matters that would require a legislative or regulatory amendment, or a change in the direction or guidance set out in MNRF manuals, policies or guides.

Once your request has been reviewed, you will either be invited to attend a meeting (i.e., conference/video call or face-to-face) to discuss your issue(s), or you will receive notification that your issue is out of scope of the issue resolution process.

Who will hear my issue?

If you are invited to attend an issue resolution meeting, either the MNRF district manager or regional director will hear your issue(s), depending upon the stage of FMP development when you raise your issue(s). You will receive a written response from the MNRF district manager or regional director that heard your issue(s).

Public involvement in preparing a forest management plan

Stage One - Invitation to participate

What is the purpose of Stage One?

The Invitation to Participate tells you that a new FMP is being prepared and invites you to get involved in the planning process.

How can I get involved at Stage One?

During Stage One, you can meet with the planning team, plan author, and local citizens' committee to discuss your interests and share what you know about the forest.

What kind of information can I provide at Stage One?

At this stage, you are invited to share your views on what you want your forest to look like in the future and what benefits you want the forest to provide.

You are also encouraged to share information about values or important ecological features on the forest. These may include:

- location of tourism establishments
- canoe routes
- mining claims
- archaeological sites
- traplines
- cabins
- trails
- species at risk, and
- wildlife habitat areas

Where can I get information at Stage One?

Information is available at the office of the sustainable forest licensee, at the [local MNRF office](#) and on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#).

What does the planning team do with the information I provide?

The planning team considers all information submitted by the public, First Nation and Métis communities, and stakeholders.

The planning team meets with the local citizens' committee to share the information it has received and to begin defining what the forest should look like in the future and what sorts of benefits can be made available. In addition to providing wood to mills, forests provide habitat for fish and wildlife, and opportunities for recreation and tourism. Once benefits are identified, objectives can be proposed, and computer models can be used to predict what the future forest might look like based on different management options.

The information you provide as part of Stage One assists the planning team in the development of the proposed long-term management direction. The proposed long-term management direction includes the levels of the desired benefits such as harvest area and wildlife habitat.

What if I have an unresolved concern?

If you raised a concern with the plan author during this stage and it has not been addressed to your satisfaction, you can request [issue resolution](#) with the MNRF district manager. If your issue is still not addressed to your satisfaction you can request issue resolution with the MNRF regional director.

Stage Two - Review of the long-term management direction

What is the purpose of Stage Two?

The long-term management direction is the backbone of the FMP. During this stage, the planning team analyzes the background information collected, including input it has received from the public, First Nation and Métis communities, stakeholders, and the local citizens' committee. The team uses this information to determine the objectives for the plan and how those objectives will be measured.

The long-term management direction is proposed after testing how well different management options meet identified objectives. This approach provides for the best balance of the benefits that the planning team can achieve (e.g. wildlife habitat, wood supply).

In this stage, the planning team also establishes a maximum sustainable harvest area that cannot be exceeded during each ten-year FMP.

How can I get involved at Stage Two?

The Stage Two notice invites you to review and comment on the proposed long-term management direction for the forest, areas that may be harvested and primary roads (long-term) that may be built during the ten-year period of the plan.

Here are some examples of information that you may be interested in reviewing and commenting on:

- a summary of the proposed long-term management direction for the forest
- a summary of comments received on the plan and responses provided to date
- a summary of the results of the desired forest and benefits meeting held between the planning team, the local citizens' committee, and First Nation and Métis communities
- maps showing ten years of past harvest operations
- the criteria used to choose potential harvest areas for the new FMP
- how the preferred harvest areas for the new FMP were chosen

- the proposed locations of primary roads
- the use management strategies for proposed primary roads
- a summary of the local citizens' committee activities to date

You have 15 days to review and comment on this information. Your input may result in changes to the long-term management direction before it is approved by the MNRF regional director.

Where can I get information at Stage Two?

Information will be available at the office of the sustainable forest licensee, the [local MNRF office](#) and on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#)

What if I have an unresolved concern?

If you raised a concern with the plan author during this stage and it has not been addressed to your satisfaction, you can request [issue resolution](#) with the MNRF district manager. If your issue is still not addressed to your satisfaction, you can request issue resolution with the MNRF regional director.

Stage Three - Review of proposed operations

What is the purpose of Stage Three?

After the long-term management direction is approved by the MNRF, the detailed planning of forest operations for the ten-year period begins. The Stage Three notice invites you to attend an information forum where the plan author, members of the planning team and a representative from the local citizens' committee will be able to answer questions.

How can I get involved at Stage Three?

Here are some examples of information that you may be interested in reviewing or commenting on:

- the proposed locations of roads and locations where aggregates may be extracted
- the use management strategies for proposed roads
- the proposed locations of harvest, renewal, and tending operations
- the location of values or important ecological features
- how impacts to values or important ecological features will be prevented, minimized, or mitigated during forest operations
- whether you have information relating to values and important ecological features that could be affected by forest operations

Your input may result in changes to the proposed operations for the management unit.

Where can I get information at Stage Three?

Information will be available at the information forum, and for 30 days after the information forum at the office of the sustainable forest licensee, at the [local MNRF office](#) and on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#).

What if I have an unresolved issue?

If you raised a concern with the plan author during this stage and it has not been addressed to your satisfaction, you can request [issue resolution](#) with the MNRF

district manager. If your issue is still not addressed to your satisfaction, you can request issue resolution with the MNR regional director.

Stage Four - Review of draft forest management plan

What is the purpose of Stage Four?

After operational planning is completed, a draft FMP is prepared and reviewed by the MNRF. The Stage Four notice invites you to attend an information forum to review and comment on the draft FMP.

How can I get involved at Stage Four?

You can comment on the proposed forest operations in the draft FMP and review whether your interests and issues have been addressed. You can also provide any additional information that will help the planning team finalize the FMP. The plan author, members of the planning team and a representative from the local citizens' committee will be at the information forum to answer questions.

Your input may result in changes to the FMP before it is approved by the MNRF regional director.

Where can I get information at Stage Four?

The draft FMP and the draft FMP summary will be available at the information forum and during the 60-day review and comment period at the office of the sustainable forest licensee, at the [local MNRF office](#), and on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#).

What if I have an unresolved issue?

If you raised a concern with the plan author during this stage and it has not been addressed to your satisfaction, you can request [issue resolution](#) with the MNRF district manager during the 60-day review and comment period of the draft FMP. If your issue is still not resolved to your satisfaction, you can request issue resolution with the MNRF regional director within 15 days after the 60-day review and comment period of the draft FMP.

Stage Five - Inspection of approved forest management plan

What is the purpose of Stage Five?

After the 60-day period for reviewing and commenting on the draft FMP, the plan is revised to address the comments received. It is then submitted to the MNRF regional director for approval.

Where can I get information at Stage Five?

The approved FMP and the FMP summary will be available at the office of the sustainable forest licensee and on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#) for the duration of the FMP.

If you are interested in discussing the approved FMP, you can arrange an appointment with the [local MNRF office](#) staff.

Contingency plans

What is a contingency plan?

A contingency plan is an interim FMP that is prepared due to a delay in the approval of a forest management plan and is intended to permit the implementation of operations between the expiry of the current FMP and the approval of the next FMP. There are two types of contingency plans: short-term contingency plans of up to one year and long-term contingency plans ranging from one to three years.

When are contingency plans prepared?

Contingency plans are prepared when:

- a ten-year FMP will not be approved on schedule
- the preparation of a ten-year FMP is delayed
- there is a proposal to combine management units
- a new plan is needed to address something that wasn't expected (e.g. a major fire on the management unit)

How would I know a contingency plan is being prepared?

There is no formal public consultation on short-term contingency plans, these plans only include forest operations that have been previously approved and consulted on in the most recent FMP.

For longer-term contingency plans, people and organizations on the FMP mailing list will receive a notice. Notices may also be posted in media (e.g. newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media) and on the Natural Resources Information Portal.

Where can I get information on a contingency plan?

Information on a contingency plan, including the draft plan, will be available at the office of the sustainable forest licensee and on the Natural Resources Information Portal.

How can I get involved in the preparation of a long term contingency plan?

The planning team will prepare the long term contingency plan and wants to hear from people and organizations interested in and affected by forest operations. There will be at least one opportunity to review and provide comments on the forest operations that are part of the contingency plan. Opportunities may vary depending on the consultation that has already occurred on the preparation of the next ten-year FMP.

What if I have an unresolved issue?

If you raised a concern with the plan author and it has not been addressed to your satisfaction, you can request [issue resolution](#) with the MNRF district manager during the review and comment period of the draft Contingency Plan. If your issue is still not addressed to your satisfaction, you can request issue resolution with the MNRF regional director.

Where can I view an approved contingency plan?

Contingency plans are available at the office of the sustainable forest licensee and on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#).

If you are interested in discussing the approved contingency plan, you can arrange an appointment with the [local MNRF office](#) staff.

Public involvement in maintaining a forest management plan

Forest management plan extensions

What is a forest management plan extension?

A FMP extension adds time to the period of a FMP so the plan can continue to be implemented. There are no changes to the approved operations. There are two types of FMP extensions: a short-term FMP extension of up to three months and a long-term FMP extension. FMP extensions provide further opportunities to extend a FMP where operations approved under the current FMP are available and not expected to be completed by the end of the FMP period.

Where can I get information on a forest management plan extension?

Information on a FMP extension, including the draft FMP extension, is available at the office of the sustainable forest licensee and on the Natural Resources Information Portal.

How can I get involved in the preparation of a forest management plan extension?

There is no consultation on short-term extensions.

If you are interested in the FMP or are directly affected by planned operations in the long-term FMP extension, you will receive a notice about the FMP extension. You will have 15 days from the date of the notice to comment on the FMP extension.

Here are some examples of information that you may be interested in reviewing and providing input on:

- existing agreements you have with the forest manager regarding the completion of operations
- the location of forest operations during the FMP extension
- information relating to values and important ecological features that could be affected by forest operations

Where can I view an approved forest management plan extension?

FMP extensions are available at the office of the sustainable forest licensee and on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#).

If you are interested in discussing the approved plan extension, you can arrange an appointment with the [local MNRF office staff](#).

Forest management plan amendments

What is a forest management plan amendment?

An amendment is a change that may be needed at any time during the implementation of a FMP. A significant change may require extra planning or consultation. An example of an amendment is changing the location of harvest operations.

What are the different types of forest management plan amendments?

There are four types of amendments: administrative, minor, major and amendment to the long-term management direction.

Who can request a forest management plan amendment?

Any person can make a written request to the MNRF district manager to amend a FMP. Requested amendments will be categorized by the MNRF district manager, in consultation with the local citizens' committee and the plan author, as either administrative, minor, or major.

Only the MNRF regional director can require an amendment to the long-term management direction of an approved FMP and only to address:

- changes in legislation and policy, or
- a major disturbance that occurred on the management unit (e.g. forest fire).

How can I become involved with the different types of forest management plan amendments?

Administrative amendments

These amendments are usually simple corrections or small changes to the FMP that have limited potential to impact operations. MNR does not consult on administrative amendments.

Minor/major amendments

These amendments require additional planning and consultation. The planning team wants to hear from people and organizations interested in, and affected by, minor or major amendments. Notices are sent to people and organizations on the mailing list. Notices may also be posted in media (e.g. newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media) and on the Natural Resources Information Portal.

Here are some examples of information that you may be interested in reviewing and providing input on:

- the proposed locations of roads and locations where aggregates may be extracted
- the use management strategies for proposed roads
- the proposed locations of harvest, renewal, and tending operations
- the location of values or important ecological features
- how impacts to values or important ecological features will be prevented, minimized, or mitigated during forest operations
- whether you have information relating to values and important ecological features that could be affected by forest operations

For minor and major amendments, the notices will provide a date by which comments must be received. Members of the planning team and local citizens' committee will be available to answer questions and discuss any concerns you have about the amendment.

Long-term management direction amendments

This type of amendment requires a change to the strategic direction of the FMP and has three consultation stages. At each stage, notices are sent to people and organizations on the mailing list. Notices may also be posted in media (e.g. newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media) and on the Natural Resources Information Portal.

At each stage you can review and comment on maps and relevant information associated with the amendment. This information includes:

- proposed changes to the long-term management direction and the summary of the proposed long-term management direction for the forest
- areas that may be reasonably harvested, and any changes to the preferred harvest areas for the remainder of the FMP
- changes to primary road corridors, and any alternative corridors
- proposed areas for harvest, renewal and tending operations
- proposed locations of roads and locations where aggregates may be extracted
- the use management strategies for proposed roads
- any new information about values or important ecological features that may exist on the management unit that can be used in planning

You will be asked to provide input within a specific timeframe. Members of the planning team and local citizens' committee will be available to answer questions and discuss any concerns you have about the amendment.

What if I have an unresolved issue on a minor, major, or long-term management direction amendment?

There is an opportunity to request [issue resolution](#) on minor, major, or long-term management direction amendments. If you raised a concern with the plan author for these types of amendments and it has not been addressed to your satisfaction, you can request issue resolution with the MNR district manager. If your issue is not

resolved to your satisfaction, you can request issue resolution with the MNRF regional director.

Where can I view an approved forest management plan amendment?

FMP amendments are available at the office of the sustainable forest licensee and on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#). If you are interested in discussing the approved amendment, you can arrange an appointment with the [local MNRF office staff](#).

Public involvement in implementing a forest management plan

Annual work schedules

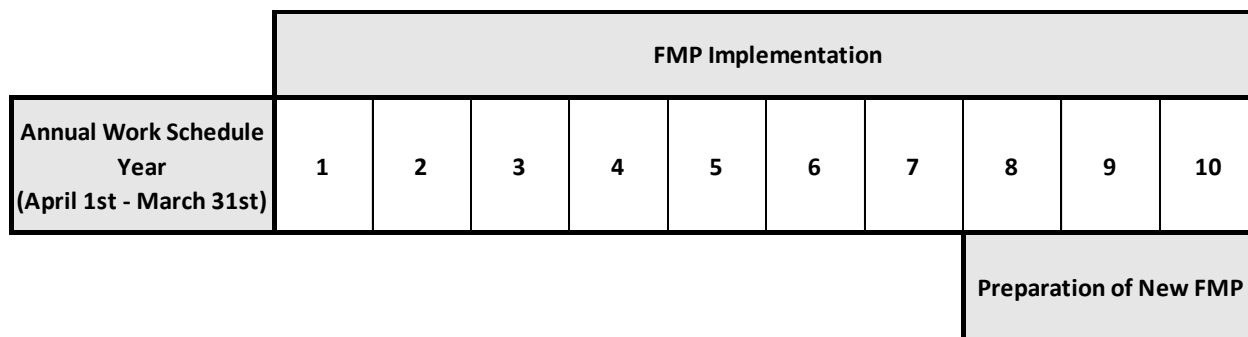
What is an annual work schedule?

An annual work schedule identifies forest operations from the approved FMP that are scheduled to be implemented during a specific year.

When is an annual work schedule prepared?

An annual work schedule is prepared every year and is normally submitted at least three months before the anticipated April 1st start date. Annual work schedules always end on March 31st of the next calendar year (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Timeline for annual work schedules



What is included in an annual work schedule?

Forest operations that will be identified in the annual work schedule include:

- areas to be harvested, possibly including locations where fuelwood (firewood) can be obtained
- areas to be site prepared, planted, seeded, naturally regenerated, or tended
- road construction and decommissioning operations
- locations for water crossing construction and removal
- access controls (e.g. gates, berms, signage)
- aggregates and temporary wood storage yards

Prescribed burn plans and aerial herbicide and insecticide programs are prepared annually as required and become part of the annual work schedule once they are approved.

Can I get involved with the preparation of an annual work schedule?

Generally, no. Interested people and organizations were invited to provide input on planned operations during the preparation of the FMP.

Where can I view an annual work schedule?

The annual work schedule will be available for one year (until March 31st of the following year) at the office of the sustainable forest licensee and on the Natural Resources Information Portal.

When the annual work schedule is finalized and at least 15 days before operations begin, people and organizations on the mailing list will be notified. At the same time, there may also be notices posted in media (e.g. newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media) and on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#). If you are interested in discussing the annual work schedule, you can arrange an appointment with the [local MNRF office staff](#).

Prescribed burn plans

What is a prescribed burn?

A prescribed burn is the deliberate use of fire in a specific area, under certain conditions, to help manage the forest.

Prescribed burns can:

- clear areas to prepare for planting
- remove undesirable plants that compete with desired species for nutrients
- remove undergrowth and allow sunlight to reach the forest floor, encouraging the growth and survival of selected tree species
- control insect pests and diseases
- make nutrients more readily available to the ecosystem

What is a prescribed burn plan?

Prescribed burn plans are prepared for a specific geographic area in accordance with the MNRF policy and guidelines. The [Prescribed Burn Manual](#) describes the requirements for preparing prescribed burn plans. Once the plans are approved by the MNRF they become part of the annual work schedule.

Will I be notified that a prescribed burn is to occur?

If you have identified an interest in a specific prescribed burn, you will receive a notice at least 30 days before the anticipated date of the burn. Notices may also be posted in media (e.g. newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media). at least 30 days before the anticipated date of the burn. This notice will include contact information if you have specific questions about the prescribed burn.

Signs will be posted at main roads that lead to the prescribed burn area indicating when the burn is to occur, and whom to contact if you have questions.

Where can I view the prescribed burn plan?

The approved prescribed burn plan will be available at the office of the sustainable forest licensee and on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#).

If you are interested in discussing the approved prescribed burn plan, you can arrange an appointment with the [local MNR office staff](#).

Annual aerial herbicide and insecticide programs

What are aerial herbicide and insecticide programs?

Aerial herbicide programs involve the application of herbicides by aircraft to control vegetation that might compete with the trees growing on a site after it has been harvested.

Aerial insecticide programs involve the application of insecticides by aircraft to control unwanted insects within the forest such as the spruce budworm or the forest tent caterpillar.

Aerial herbicide and insecticide programs happen only in the management unit for which they are prepared.

Once these programs have been approved by MNRF they become part of the annual work schedule.

Can I get involved in the preparation of an aerial herbicide or insecticide program?

Generally, no. Interested and affected people and organizations were invited to provide input on planned operations during the preparation of the FMP or the insect pest management program.

Will I be notified that an aerial herbicide or insecticide program is to occur?

If you have identified an interest in aerial herbicide or insecticide programs on the management unit, you will receive notice of the operation at least 30 days before the anticipated date of the operation. If you live, or own land, within one kilometre of the operation you will receive notice of the operation at least 30 days before the anticipated date of the operation. Notices may also be posted in media (e.g. newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media) and on the Natural Resources Information Portal, at least 30 days before the anticipated date of the operation. The notice will include contact information if you have questions.

Seven days before the operation is scheduled to begin, signs will be posted in areas where herbicide or insecticide applications are planned. These signs will include contact information if you have questions.

Where can I view aerial herbicide or insecticide programs?

The approved aerial herbicide and insecticide program plans will be available at the office of the sustainable forest licensee and on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#).

If you are interested in discussing the approved aerial herbicide and insecticide program plans, you can arrange an appointment with the [local MNRF office staff](#).

Insect pest management programs

What is an insect pest management program?

An insect pest management program is a planning process MNRF completes to determine the types and locations of operations that are required to remove or control an insect pest.

When and where are insect pest management programs implemented?

An insect management program is only implemented when and where a major insect pest infestation occurs and usually where multiple management units are affected. On average this kind of program is implemented once every five years.

What happens during an insect pest management program?

The program identifies and maps areas that require some form of treatment. It also details treatment options to remove or control the insect pest (e.g. redirecting harvest areas to target the insect habitat).

The option selected may require an amendment to the FMP. These amendments are categorized as administrative to facilitate the expeditious planning and implementation of harvest operations to mitigate the spread of the insect.

What does the MNRF consider a major insect infestation?

Major insect infestations affect very large areas (multiple management units), have affected an area in the past, and/or are of provincial significance. The treatments need to be planned and implemented quickly to control the spread of the insect and the amount of area affected. The occurrence and extent of insect infestations are determined on an annual basis.

How can I become involved in the preparation of an insect pest management program?

A planning team, including representatives from MNRF, the forest industry, First Nation and Métis communities and the local citizens' committee(s) prepares the program. The planning team wants to hear from people and organizations that are interested in and affected by the operations proposed in the insect pest

management program. If you have expressed an interest in insect pest management programs to the MNRF, you will receive a notice on the proposed insect pest management program and any potential proposals for specific aerial insecticide projects.

You can also visit an information forum to discuss your concerns and submit comments. At the information forum you can review:

- infestation maps and population forecasts
- areas eligible for insect pest management
- values information for the area

After you review the insect pest management program, you can provide input on:

- the evaluation of management options
- the selected course of action
- draft project proposals for the specific aerial insecticide projects, and associated maps

You will have 15 days from the date of the information forum to submit comments to the MNRF.

What if I have an unresolved issue?

If you raised a concern during the preparation of an insect pest management program and it has not been addressed to your satisfaction, you have the opportunity to request [issue resolution](#) with the MNRF regional director during the 15-day period following the information forum.

Where can I view the approved insect pest management program?

The approved insect pest management program will be available at the appropriate MNRF offices and on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#).

If you are interested in discussing the approved insect pest management program, you can arrange an appointment with the [local MNRF office](#).

First Nation and Métis community involvement

Forest management plans

How can First Nation and Métis communities get involved in forest management planning?

First Nation and Métis communities in or adjacent to a management unit can participate in the forest management planning process. Each community:

- may choose to have a representative on the planning team
- can work with the MNRF to develop a customized consultation approach
- can identify values or important ecological features they want protected
- can participate in the development and review of related reports
- can review and comment on the FMP while it is being prepared (e.g. Long-term Management Direction, Proposed Operations, Draft FMP)

How are First Nation and Métis communities defined?

A First Nation community means a First Nation community that is in or adjacent to the management unit as determined by the MNRF district manager. A Métis community means a Métis community that is in or adjacent to the management unit as determined by the MNRF district manager.

Based on available information, for each community that the MNRF understands as having established or credibly asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights and that is located in Ontario, the MNRF district manager will consider the following criteria when determining whether a community is a First Nation or Métis community in or adjacent to a management unit:

- whether the community's established or credibly asserted Aboriginal or treaty rights may be adversely impacted by forest operations in the management unit
- whether the community has traditional uses that may be affected by forest operations in the management unit

- whether the community has a local governance body or reserve in or near the management unit
- whether the community has expressed interest in forest management planning or forest operations specific to the management unit

How will my community know that the forest management planning process is starting?

The MNRF district manager will contact your community at least nine months before the start of the planning process for the next FMP. This notice is to let your community know that there are opportunities to be involved in the upcoming forest management planning process. These opportunities are intended to provide for the consideration of rights, interests, and traditional uses in the forest. Your community's members may also see notices posted in media (e.g. newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media) and on the Natural Resources Information Portal.

What are the opportunities for my community to be involved in the planning process?

Participation on the planning team and the local citizens' committee:

Your community's leadership will be invited to identify a representative to be a member of the forest management planning team and another member to be on the local citizens' committee. The representatives, if identified, will have the opportunity to support your community's involvement in the planning process.

Input to the steering committee:

If there are concerns or disagreements raised by the planning team during the planning process, your community's representative on the planning team will have the opportunity to help resolve the concern or disagreement by providing their perspectives directly to the steering committee.

Use the standardized consultation approach:

Your community can participate in the public consultation opportunities available and will be contacted by the MNRF district manager each time a public information

forum is scheduled to determine whether there is an interest in having a First Nation or Métis community information forum. Special notifications, involvement and presentations are available.

Developing a customized consultation approach:

Your community's leadership will also be invited to discuss the development of a consultation approach that will be effective for your community. The development of a customized consultation approach for your community is optional. If your community decides to proceed without a customized consultation approach, or a customized consultation approach is not agreed upon, your community can participate through the standard consultation process for First Nation and Métis communities.

What is a customized consultation approach and how is it developed?

The customized consultation approach describes how the community wants to be involved in the preparation and implementation of the FMP. If your community agrees to develop a customized consultation approach, it is developed by the community, the plan author and the MNRF. The community and the MNRF need to agree to the customized consultation approach. The customized consultation approach can be developed at any time during the preparation and implementation of the FMP. The approach may, among other things, address items such as how:

- the community is to be notified during the preparation of the FMP
- information is made available to the community to support the community's review and comment during the preparation of the FMP
- the community identifies and provides values information
- the community is to be involved in development of prescriptions to protect those values
- the community is to be involved in the planning of operations

The customized consultation approach may address all aspects of forest management planning including FMP amendments, contingency plans, FMP

extensions, annual work schedules, prescribed burns, aerial herbicide and insecticide programs, and/or insect pest management programs.

How are First Nation and Métis communities consulted at each stage of consultation?

Input from First Nation and Métis communities is an important part of the forest management planning process. If your community chooses not to develop a customized consultation approach, your community will be consulted through the standard consultation process for First Nation and Métis communities. This process provides for the same, and more, opportunities to get involved as the public consultation process.

As detailed earlier in this document, the planning process is divided into five stages. At each stage, along with notices posted in media (e.g. newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media) and on the Natural Resources Information Portal, notices will be sent to your community and a notice will be placed in local Indigenous media, where available. In addition to the public consultation opportunities, your community will be invited to:

- identify First Nation or Métis values
- participate in the preparation of the First Nation and Métis Background Information Report
- participate in the desired forest and benefits meeting
- attend a presentation on the proposed long-term management direction
- participate in the planning of forest operations to address identified values
- request a special information forum for your community at the Review of Proposed Operations and the Review of the Draft FMP

What are some of the contributions my community can make in the preparation of the forest management plan?

During the preparation of the FMP, your community can participate in the development of several reports. These reports include:

- a First Nation and Métis Background Information Report

- a Report on Protection of Identified First Nation and Métis Values

During the development of these reports, the MNRF will seek the community's advice on making these documents available to the public.

What is the First Nation and Métis Background Information Report?

The First Nation and Métis Background Information Report documents your community's values and traditional ecological knowledge. The community is invited to participate in preparing the First Nation and Métis Background Information Report.

This report will include:

- a summary of how your community uses natural resources on the management unit for domestic purposes (e.g. hunting, fishing, trapping, harvesting of wood, and gathering)
- a summary of your community's concerns related to forest management
- a summary of your community's involvement in the preparation of the report
- a First Nation and Métis values map

What is the Report on the Protection of Identified First Nation and Métis Values?

The Report on the Protection of First Nation and Métis Values documents how values identified in the First Nation and Métis Background Information Report have been addressed in the planning of forest operations. This report includes:

- a summary of proposed areas where harvest, renewal and tending will occur
- a discussion of proposed road locations of interest to your community
- the most current version of the values map(s) and the First Nation and Métis values map
- a discussion of proposed operational prescriptions for specific areas of concern associated with your community's values
- a discussion of how your community's values will be protected
- a comment sheet with the names of your community contact person and the MNRF contact person

What additional consultation opportunities are there for communities in the Far North?

For management units that are in the Far North (e.g. Whitefeather Forest), elders from the communities within the management unit can provide guidance related to forest management planning. This may include providing advice, communicating with community members, and building community consensus. Elders can also be part of a steering group which will communicate with the planning team.

If your community is within the management unit for which a plan is being prepared, your community will have an opportunity to build community consensus before formal consultation opportunities occur with communities adjacent to the management unit.

There is also an opportunity for community elders, trappers, and other community members to be involved in monitoring forest operations. This will support gathering and recording your community's Indigenous knowledge to inform forest management planning or other future plans.

Contingency plans

How will my community be involved in the preparation or implementation of a contingency plan?

If your community has agreed to a customized consultation approach that contains provisions for contingency plans, the agreed upon approach to consultation will apply.

If your community decides to proceed without a customized consultation approach for the contingency plan, your community can participate through the standard consultation process for First Nation and Métis communities. The standard consultation process for First Nation and Métis communities includes all the opportunities that are included in the public consultation opportunities, plus additional opportunities.

When either a short-term or longer-term contingency plan is being prepared, notices will be sent to your community and a notice will be placed in local Indigenous media where available. Additional notices may be posted in media (e.g. newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media) and on the Natural Resources Information Portal.

Your community can also request a special information forum.

Forest management plan maintenance and implementation

How will my community be involved in forest management plan maintenance and implementation?

If your community developed a customized consultation approach that contains provisions for FMP amendments, FMP extensions, annual work schedules, prescribed burns, aerial herbicide and insecticide programs, or insect pest management programs, then that approach will apply to involvement on these matters.

If your community is using the standard consultation approach, the provisions for public consultation will apply with any modifications that are specific for your community.

The following questions and answers build on the standard consultation provisions.

What opportunity is there for my community to get involved in forest management plan amendments?

For minor amendments, your community will be invited to review and comment on the amendment and any updates to the Report on Protection of Identified First Nation and Métis Values.

For major amendments, your community will be invited to review and comment on the amendment and any updates to the Report on Protection of Identified First Nation and Métis Values and request a special information forum for your community.

For amendments to the long-term management direction, your community will be invited to participate in the planning of forest operations for the amendment to ensure your values are addressed. Your community will also be able to review and comment on the amendment and any updates to the Report on Protection of Identified First Nation and Métis Values. Your community can also request an information forum to learn more.

How will my community be involved in forest management plan extensions?

For long term FMP extensions, your community will be asked to review and provide comments to the MNR regional resources manager to consider when deciding whether the FMP extension should proceed.

For long-term FMP extensions your community can request a special information forum as part of the consultation process.

How will my community be involved in annual work schedules?

For annual work schedules, your community will be provided a copy of the annual work schedule and invited to a meeting to discuss the annual work schedule. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the operations and provide the opportunity for your community to identify any updated values that are important to your community and that may be affected by the forest operations. Your community will have 60 days to review and comment on the annual work schedule. If your community identifies new values, then they can also review and comment on the updated Report on the Protection of Identified First Nation and Métis Values.

How will my community know where and when specific prescribed burns and aerial insecticide programs are to occur?

Your community will be provided maps that identify the location of the operations associated with a prescribed burn or aerial herbicide and insecticide program.

How will my community be involved in insect pest management programs?

When an insect pest management program is being prepared, your community will be invited to participate on the planning team, and to review and comment on the program and the specific project proposals for the aerial insecticide programs. Your community can also request a special information forum.

Involvement opportunities in independent forest audits

What is an independent forest audit?

An independent auditor assesses the performance of both the sustainable forest licence holder and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in meeting their forest management responsibilities.

Can I get involved in forests audits?

Yes, input is an important part of the independent forest audit process. Auditors typically issue notices advising that an independent forest audit is being conducted. The notices identify the purpose of the audit and invite comments. The notices are generally placed in local print media. Audit firms often include a survey on their websites and contact First Nation and Métis communities, within or adjacent to the forest who participate in activities on the management unit, to invite them to participate in the audit process.

Auditors typically want to learn of any forest management concerns, whether there are specific locations on the forest the auditors should examine, and whether forest management planning manual requirements have been met.

Local citizens' committees also play an important role in the audit process. Auditor's interview committee members to learn of any forest management concerns and a committee member is invited to participate in the audit.

Involvement opportunities in forest policy

What is forest policy?

Forest policies provide direction on how forest management will be conducted, monitored and reported upon. MNRF maintains policies to ensure the sustainable management and use of Crown forests. Examples of forest policy direction include:

- Policy Framework for Sustainable Forests
- Forest management guides
- Forest Compliance Strategy

MNRF maintains a Provincial Forest Technical Committee which provides advice on forest management guides. Members have expertise in forest management and forest sciences. Members represent a range of perspectives from the forest industry, environmental organizations, Indigenous people, academia and research organizations. :

Are there opportunities for involvement in forest policy?

When forest policies are being proposed or revised, they are normally posted on the Environmental Registry. There, interested people or organizations are encouraged to review and provide comments. You can also access the Environmental Registry to review the decision posting to see how comments were considered.

Reporting on forest operations

How often are reports on forest management operations prepared, what do they include, and where do I find them?

Annual reports are prepared every year for each management unit. They summarize forest management operations that occurred in the management unit over the previous year. Finalized reports are available on the Natural Resources Information Portal.

MNRF summarizes the management unit annual reports into a [provincial report](#).

Every five years, MNRF also prepares a report that includes information on the [state of Ontario's forests](#) that summarizes important information about the health and well-being of the province's forests, communities and forest industry.