

# Help shape the future of our forests

Get involved in Ontario's forest management planning process

Ministry of Natural Resources  
and Forestry  
Crown Forests and Lands  
Policy Branch

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# Our forests, our future, your opportunity to get involved

To have healthy forests tomorrow, we need to look after them today. The forest management planning process provides every citizen of Ontario the opportunity to give meaningful input to the management of Ontario's Crown forests.

The province of Ontario is a world leader in sustainable forest management. Ontario's Crown forests are managed for many uses and to meet the social, economic and environmental needs of present and future generations. To achieve sustainability, forests must be maintained in a healthy state, and the value of the forest to all users must be considered in determining management actions.

Ontario's Crown forests are the principle source of renewable wood fibre for Ontario's forest industry. Crown forests are managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF). This responsibility is also shared with the forest industry, Indigenous peoples, and the citizens of Ontario.

There is a significant role for the citizens of Ontario, including First Nation and Métis communities, stakeholders, and environmental groups, in the planning process. With your involvement, a balance of the social, economic and environmental objectives for the management of Crown forests can be achieved.

Get involved in Ontario's forest management planning process and have a say in the future of Ontario's Crown forests.

## The forest management planning system

Ontario's forest management planning system for Crown forests is based on a legal and policy framework that has sustainability, First Nation and Métis community involvement and consultation, public involvement, and adaptive management as key elements.

The Crown Forest Sustainability Act provides the legislative framework for forest management on Crown lands in Ontario. The Crown Forest Sustainability Act requires that each Forest Management Plan have regard for plant life, animal life, water, soil, air and social and economic values, including recreational and heritage values. To achieve this requirement, each plan contains a long-term management direction that balances objectives related to forest diversity, socioeconomics, forest cover and silviculture.

A Forest Management Plan (FMP) is prepared for a 10-year period for each management unit in the province. Each plan outlines the long-term objectives for the management unit and what forest operations will be completed during the 10-

year period. A plan is prepared by a plan author, who is a Registered Professional Forester, with the assistance of an interdisciplinary planning team and Local Citizens' Committee, and input from First Nation and Métis communities and interested members of the public. A Forest Management Plan is approved when the MNRF Regional Director is satisfied that the plan provides for the sustainability of the forest, and that all identified concerns have been addressed.

## Should you get involved?

Ontario's forest management planning system is an open and consultative process. Your input can help to ensure that Ontario's Crown forests are managed for a broad range of uses, while conserving and enhancing economic, social, environmental and cultural values.

You should consider getting involved in the planning process if your interest in the forest includes:

- hunting, fishing, trapping, gathering or other traditional activities
- hiking, canoeing, camping or other recreational activities
- cottaging
- tourist operations, forest operations or other business interests on Crown land
- Crown land use
- cultural heritage
- the environment

The planning team encourages involvement at any time during the development or implementation of a Forest Management Plan. You can make an appointment with the plan author, MNRF or Local Citizens' Committee representative at any time during the planning process to discuss your interests and concerns.

## First Nation and Métis community involvement

Each First Nation and Métis community in or adjacent to a management unit is provided specific opportunities to participate in the planning process. Each community:

- may choose to have a representative on the planning team
- has the opportunity to work with the MNRF to develop a customized approach to consultation

- has the opportunity to identify values for protection and participate in the development and review of related reports
- has the opportunity to review and comment on components of the FMP, during preparation
- has the opportunity to review and comment on annual operations and identify any new values that may be affected by forest operations.

## How the Forest Management Plan is developed

The planning process for the preparation of a Forest Management Plan includes requirements for the development of the long-term management direction and the detailed planning of operations for the 10-year period of the plan. It takes approximately three years to prepare a Forest Management Plan and there are five stages of consultation that invite you to get involved in the planning process.

Watch for notices posted in local media (e.g., newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media) and notices on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#) for consultation opportunities related to Forest Management Planning.

The planning process begins by updating the inventory of the forest, assembling background information such as resource values and fish and wildlife inventories, and reviewing the success of forest regeneration activities.

### **Stage one of consultation**

You can identify your interests, share what you know about the forest, and provide or confirm resource values information with the planning team, plan author, and the Local Citizens' Committee. This information may include locations of tourism establishments, canoe routes, mining claims, archaeological sites, traplines, cabins, trails, and wildlife habitat areas. The earlier you provide this information the better, as it provides more time to ensure your values are considered. You can also provide your views on what you want your forest to look like in the future and what benefits you want the future forest to provide.

The planning team, in consultation with the Local Citizens' Committee, and First Nations and Métis communities, identifies desired benefits from the forest, and sets objectives to achieve them. With the aid of computer models, strategic analysis is conducted to determine the types and levels of access, harvest, renewal, and tending activities required to balance the achievement of management objectives.

The result of strategic analysis is the long-term management direction for the management unit.

The sustainable harvest level, termed the Available Harvest Area, is determined locally by the planning team as part of the development of a long-term management direction. When determining the Available Harvest Area, objectives for both timber and non-timber values (e.g., wildlife habitat, biodiversity, landscape pattern) are considered. The Available Harvest Area represents the maximum area that can be harvested during the 10-year period of the Forest Management Plan.

## **Stage two of consultation**

You can review and comment on the proposed long-term management direction for the forest, areas that may be harvested and primary (long-term) roads that may be built before the planning team moves forward with the planning of operations.

After the long-term management direction is approved by the MNRF, the detailed planning of forest operations for the ten-year period begins. Where access, harvest, renewal or tending operations may affect resource values and important ecological features, operational prescriptions and conditions are developed. These operational prescriptions and conditions are developed to prevent, minimize or mitigate any negative effects on the values or important ecological features.

During operational planning, use management strategies for roads are developed. A use management strategy identifies who can use a road and when, who is responsible for maintaining a road, changes in responsibility, and whether a road is proposed to be closed in the future.

## **Stage three of consultation**

You are invited to attend an information centre, where you can view the proposed locations for access, harvest, renewal and tending operations. You will also be able to check the location of values or important ecological features and how impacts to values or important ecological features will be prevented, minimized, or mitigated during forest operations.

After operational planning is completed, the draft Forest Management Plan is prepared and submitted for review by MNRF staff.

## **Stage four of consultation**

You are invited to attend an information centre, where you can review the proposed operations in the draft Forest Management Plan and check that your interests and concerns have been addressed. A summary of the draft Forest Management Plan is available to assist you in your review. The draft Forest Management Plan is available on the [MNRF website](#) during this public review period.

After public review of the draft Forest Management Plan, the plan is revised and submitted for approval by the MNRF Regional Director.

## **Stage five of consultation**

The approved Forest Management Plan, and Forest Management Plan summary will be available for you to view on the [MNRF website](#) and at the office of the sustainable forest licensee during the 10-year period of its implementation.

## Amendments to the Forest Management Plan

Changes to a Forest Management Plan are made through an amendment. Any person can request an amendment to a FMP by making a written request to the District Manager. An amendment may be a small change to the Forest Management Plan or may be a significant change requiring comprehensive planning and consultation. An amendment may be required at any time during the implementation of a Forest Management Plan. Amendments can be used for a variety of purposes such as changing the location of harvest operations.

Watch for notices posted in local media (e.g., newspapers, digital media such as online news sources, social media) and notices on the [Natural Resources Information Portal](#) for consultation opportunities related to plan amendments.

You can view the amendments to Forest Management Plans on the [MNRF website](#) or at the office of the sustainable forest licensee.

## Forest Management Guides

Direction from the Forest Management Guides: The MNRF relies on a set of forest management guides to provide direction on acceptable forest management practices. These guides are:

- Forest Management Guide for Boreal Landscapes
- Forest Management Guide for Great Lake-St. Lawrence Landscapes
- Forest Management Guide for Conserving Biodiversity at the Stand and Site Scales
- Forest Management Guide to Silviculture in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence and Boreal Forests of Ontario
- Management Guidelines for Forestry and Resource Based Tourism
- Forest Management Guide for Cultural Heritage Resources

These guides provide direction for the protection of wildlife and fish habitat, cultural heritage, tourism values, the construction of roads and water crossings, reforestation practices, and the emulation of natural disturbances such as fire. This direction is used in the preparation and implementation of Forest Management Plans.

## The Annual Work Schedule

Each year, an Annual Work Schedule is prepared for the management unit. The Annual Work Schedule identifies forest operations from the approved Forest Management Plan such as road construction, harvest, tree planting, and aerial spraying that are scheduled to occur during a specific year.

You can view the Annual Work Schedule on the [MNRF website](#) and at the office of the sustainable forest licensee to see where operations are scheduled to occur.

## Monitoring, reporting and assessment

Monitoring, reporting and assessment are important components of the forest management planning system. The MNRF and the sustainable forest licensee monitor and report on the implementation of the Forest Management Plan. Each year, an Annual Report is prepared for the management unit to summarize activities completed during the year. The Annual Report includes information on:

- the amount of area and volume harvested
- the amount of area site prepared and planted
- natural disturbances, such as forest fires
- road construction and maintenance activities
- the results of the monitoring.

The results of monitoring, reporting and assessment are used to make any necessary adjustments to the long-term management direction and the planning of operations in the next Forest Management Plan.

You can view the Annual Reports on the [MNRF website](#) or at the office of the sustainable forest licensee.

## Get involved in Ontario's forest management planning process

More information on how you can get involved or get information on forest management on Crown lands in Ontario can be found at [www.ontario.ca/forests](http://www.ontario.ca/forests) or

in the MNRF Handbook for Getting Involved in Forest Management on Crown Lands in Ontario.

Contact your local MNRF District Office.

Use the toll-free number if required at 1-800-667-1940.

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