



INTEGRATED
LAND-USE PLANNING
AND CANADA'S NEW
NATIONAL FOREST
STRATEGY



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT IS TO EXAMINE what integrated land-use planning should entail if it is to be conducted in accordance with an ecosystem-based management framework, as stipulated in the new National Forest Strategy (2003–2008).

The National Forest Strategy is a consensus-based document developed by provincial and territorial forest ministers, Aboriginal Peoples, diverse forestry practitioners (from woodlot owners to industrial companies), environmental organizations and university-based researchers. It identifies ecosystem-based management of Canada's forests as its first objective.

Ecosystem-based management is grounded on the principle that forest-based cultures, communities, industries and activities ultimately depend upon healthy ecosystems whose structure, function and composition have been maintained. Unfortunately, in Canada, planning processes have generally ignored this fundamental principle and operated without regard for ecosystem-based management, often resulting in land-use allocations that have fragmented and impaired forest ecosystems.

In contrast, integrated land-use planning processes can help to ensure that development activities fit sustainably within ecological limits and that conservation objectives guide land-use decisions. This is especially relevant for the future of Canada's forested ecosystems as approximately half of Canada's vast boreal forest is unallocated but undergoing planning processes that, over the next decade, will determine future allocation status.

Integrated land-use planning processes have the potential to bring together those who are affected by land-use decisions so that they can participate in decision-making, coordinate their activities and mitigate negative impacts, including cumulative impacts. Ideally, integrated land-use planning also addresses governance issues, including the coordination of policy, regulatory and management regimes. Where government agencies act, for example, under separate legal mandates and budgets, integrated land-use planning can ensure adequate coordination of activities and standard-setting. In so doing, it can deal with the cumulative environmental impacts of human activities and lead to development based on a precautionary approach. Key ecological objectives include:

- representing the full spectrum of ecosystems across their natural range of variation, in protected areas,

- maintaining viable populations of all native species in natural patterns of abundance and distribution, and
- sustaining ecological and evolutionary processes within their natural ranges of variability.

PART 1 of this report sets out a list of indicators according to which integrated land-use planning processes can be evaluated. In addition to key ecological indicators, the report also identifies several important process-oriented indicators, organized within the following categories: clear goals and terms of reference; scope; stakeholder and Aboriginal participation; knowledge base; and approval and implementation.

In PART 2 the indicators are used to assess four significant integrated land-use planning processes. These evaluations are followed by brief discussions examining the degree to which ecosystem-based management objectives were met, the impact of the participation (or non-participation) of various parties on the process, and the role of political will.

PART 3 reviews the critical issues that emerged from the four case studies. These include: the need for both protected and special management areas, the paramount need to honour and uphold Aboriginal and treaty rights and to recognize the fact that Aboriginal Peoples are more than stakeholders in planning processes, the importance of having all parties at the table, the need for an adequate time frame to work through complex issues, the importance of providing adequate resources, both financial and knowledge-based, and the need for an adequate follow up and implementation framework — ideally one that involves planning participants.

The report concludes with a set of recommended actions to be taken by the federal, provincial and territorial governments with regard to ecosystem-based land-use planning generally and each of the four planning initiatives specifically. These recommendations are:

For the Federal government:

- The development of a framework to bring provinces and territories together to collaborate on means for ensuring the maintenance of national ecosystems such as the boreal forest.
- The completion of Canada's network of national protected areas.
- The development of an accounting system that includes the values of the ecological services provided by forest ecosystems
- The creation of a publicly accessible forest information system that provides high-quality information on the status of forests across Canada to fill knowledge-based information gaps.

- The provision of capacity-building resources for meaningful participation in planning processes (especially for Aboriginal communities).

For Provincial/Territorial governments:

- Clear articulation of ecosystem-based management objectives to guide planning initiatives.
- High level political involvement to coordinate inter-departmental government initiatives and planning.
- Comprehensive data collection and dissemination of information to participants, including full economic and social valuations of different management models; assistance/support for mapping of traditional Aboriginal use and occupancy of land and resources; full disclosure of industrial expansion interests and data on wildlife habitat needs and areas of high conservation value.
- The provision of capacity-building resources for meaningful participation in planning processes (especially for Aboriginal communities).

For Provincial governments, with regard specifically to the planning initiatives discussed in this report:

Lands for Life

- As promised under Ontario's *Living Legacy*, develop detailed implementation strategies for Enhanced Management Areas with the participation of stakeholders so that industrial activities do not adversely affect identified forest values in these special management areas.

East Side of Lake Winnipeg

- Extend the East Side Planning Initiative (ESPI) to allow it to fulfill its original mandate and goals, enabling actual planning and the establishment of protected areas to occur as per the ESPI Terms of Reference.
- Provide adequate funding to ensure community and citizen participation, and an independent and transparent process, in order to realize credible plans, recommendations and actions.
- Support the preliminary need for Aboriginal communities to conduct occupancy studies and data collection regarding traditional territories.
- Utilize the next phase of the ESPI to follow through on public policy commitments and the ESPI Terms of Reference for the establishment of protected areas in the ESPI Natural Regions, including the First Nation-led World Heritage Site nomination.

- Include a full carbon inventory, carbon loss, and greenhouse gas budget and data to be applied to future decisions regarding the ESPI regions.
- Publicly release all existing information and data about the ESPI region.

Muskwa-Kechika

- Renew and reinvigorate the long-term funding and mandate of the Muskwa-Kechika Management Area.
- Delay awarding of oil and gas tenures until completion of a conservation area design, a wildlife management plan and a park management plan.
- Devolve more power to Aboriginal Peoples by forming a co-management authority.

Athabasca

- Ensure that industrial activity does not occur within protected areas.
- Require co-management (including Aboriginal and community representation) approval for industrial initiatives that are proposed within the planning area (outside of protected areas).