

British Columbia's Boreal Region

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British Columbia Forest Facts

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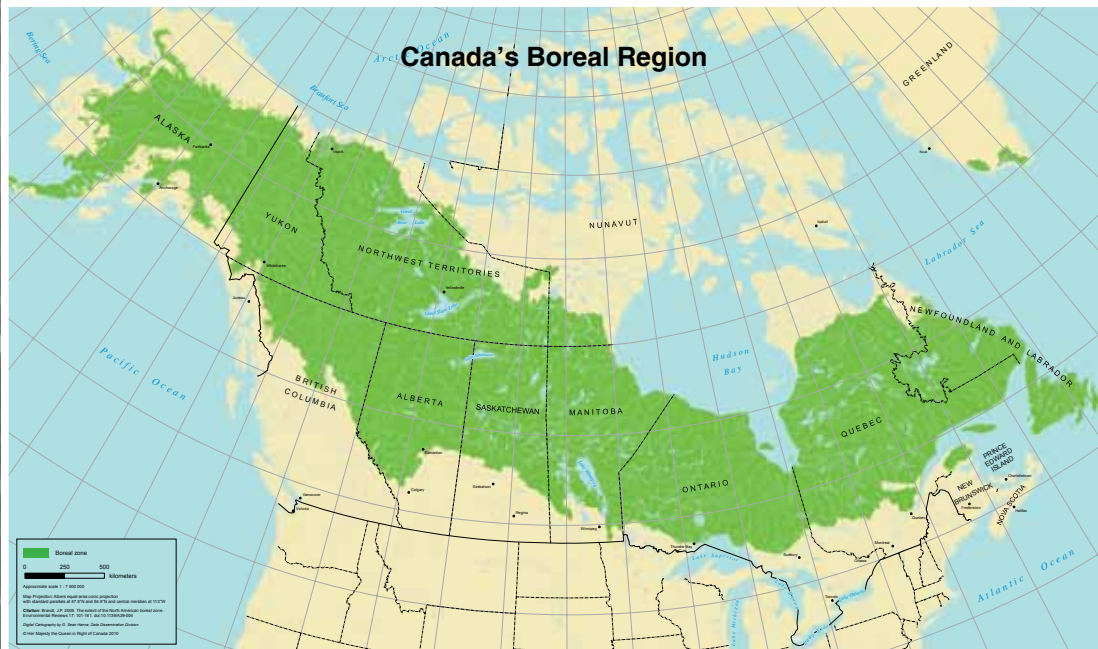


B.C. accounts for less than two per cent of the world's boreal region.

MANAGING THE BOREAL FOREST IN B.C.

The boreal region encircles the upper portion of the northern hemisphere and contains one-third of the world's forests. The forests in the boreal region are important to the countries where they are found, and globally. They provide habitat for hundreds of wildlife species and they support forest economies in jurisdictions such as Russia, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Finland and Alaska. Canada's share of the global boreal is close to 30 per cent.

In Canada, the boreal zone covers more than 550 million hectares (about 1.4 billion acres), and contains 307 million hectares (760 million acres) of boreal forest. In British Columbia, the boreal zone covers 32 million hectares (79 million acres) and accounts for about six per cent of Canada's boreal, or less than two per cent of the world's boreal region. The boreal zone is an important part of B.C.'s diverse and complex ecosystem network.





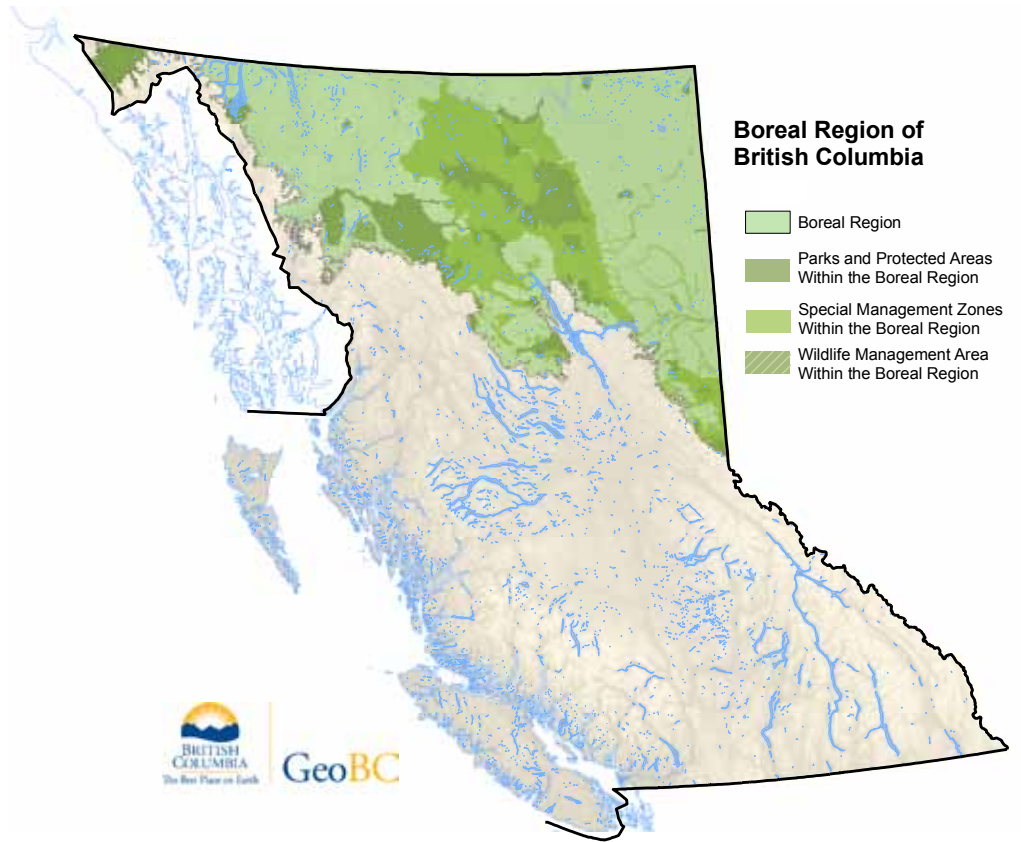
B.C.'S BOREAL REGION

As is the case worldwide, B.C.'s boreal region experiences four distinct seasons, with long, cold winters and long days of sunshine during its short, warm summers. Hardwoods such as trembling aspen and black cottonwood and softwoods such as spruces and lodgepole pine thrive in B.C.'s boreal region.

Not unlike other regions of B.C., the forests, grasslands, alpine, wetlands, and rivers found in B.C.'s boreal region provide habitat for a vast array of wildlife, including waterfowl and other birds that migrate north to nest in the summer. The boreal is also home to moose,

caribou, elk, stone sheep, mountain goats, black bear, grizzly bear and grey wolves.

The boreal forest in B.C. is shaped by natural disturbances, including huge wildfires that are driven by winds across the flat, rolling terrain on a regular basis. This high rate of natural disturbance results in forests that are of many different ages, and are generally younger than those in B.C.'s other forest regions. The largest recorded wildfire in B.C. was the 1958 Kech fire, which burned 225,920 hectares (560,000 acres) in the Kechika Valley.



SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREAS IN THE BOREAL

Parks, protected areas and other special management zones within the Boreal Region in B.C. total 11.4 million hectares (28.2 million acres), or 36 per cent of the region.

The Tatshenshini-Alsek Park, together with adjacent parks in Alaska and the Yukon, forms the largest international World Heritage Site. Scientists say the mixed spruce-willow-birch forest along the lower stretch of the Tatshenshini River is unique in B.C.

In north central B.C. where the boreal plains and muskeg in the east meet the Northern Rocky Mountains, the Muskwa-Kechika management area covers 6.4 million hectares (15.8 million acres) of wilderness and is home to the greatest combined abundance and diversity of large wild mammals in North America. About one-quarter of the Muskwa-Kechika is in parks and protected areas, and

three quarters is in special management zones that are managed to ensure wildlife and wilderness values are maintained as a priority.

The many provincial parks in B.C.'s boreal include Milligan Hills near the Alberta border, which protects provincially and regionally significant forest and grassland habitat for an endangered population of Woodland caribou that migrate from neighbouring Alberta.

In addition to protected areas, the region has large special management areas with plans that offer more refined guidelines to meet local needs. For example, the Dunlevy Creek special management zone sets out designated corridors that control access, protect habitat for large mammals such as caribou, elk and stone sheep, and maintain wilderness recreation opportunities.



WHERE IS B.C.'S BOREAL FOREST?

B.C.'s Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification (BEC) system provides a common reference point so resource managers can support the needs of the province's unique ecosystems. There are 14 broad BEC zones, each based on characteristic climate, soils and vegetation.

The predominant part of B.C.'s boreal forest is found in the Boreal White and Black Spruce BEC zone, which covers 15.7 million hectares (38.8 million acres) and comprises mostly mixed trembling aspen-white spruce and lodgepole pine-black spruce

forest, primarily in the far northeast. It makes up about 15 per cent of B.C.'s land base. The other BEC zones found in the boreal are the Spruce-Willow-Birch, the Alpine Tundra and Englemann Spruce-Subalpine Fir. The boreal in British Columbia is 32 million hectares (79 million acres) and covers the northern one-third of the province.





Many area licensees, including B.C. Timber Sales, are certified to one of three internationally-recognized forest certification programs: the Canadian Standards Association Sustainable Forest Management Standard (CSA), the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI).

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE BOREAL

As a result of B.C.'s comprehensive, community-based land use planning, the boreal region strives to accommodate and protect wildlife and environmental values while allowing opportunities for responsible resource use, including forestry, oil and gas development, coal exploration, tourism and agriculture. For example, the region's primary resource industries, forestry and oil and gas, plan activities together where possible to minimize road duplication.

B.C. is developing treaty-related measures with First Nations on land use, commercial recreation and tourism, and interim measures for forestry, oil and gas, and mining.

As with all other forest lands across Canada, the boreal is managed under a comprehensive set of legislation and regulations. Throughout B.C., forest activities on public lands meet the high standards demanded by customers, communities and provincial laws. Recent independent studies have found that B.C.'s forest policy regulations are among the most stringent in the world.

The majority of B.C.'s boreal forest is certified to one of three internationally-recognized third-party forest management certification programs: the Canadian Standards Association's Sustainable Forest Management Standard (CSA),

the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) or the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI). British Columbia has more certified forest land than any other jurisdiction in the world, with the exception of Canada as a whole. Only 10 per cent of the world's forests are certified and Canada has over 40 per cent of the world's certified forests. Clearcutting with reserves, which remains the most common harvesting method in the boreal forest, is best suited to the area's ecology. The results are not unlike those of natural disturbances such as wildfire, leading to harvested areas of different sizes and shapes with reserves of trees left behind to provide wildlife habitat and protect waterways and other features.

Harvesting in the boreal usually takes place during the winter when the ground is frozen, often on temporary ice roads. When harvesting is completed, forest companies plant white spruce and lodgepole pine seedlings. Some tree species, such as trembling aspen, come back quickly naturally.

B.C.'s boreal forest supports an integrated forest industry that makes the best use of the resource. Wood panels such as veneer and oriented strand board are produced from both hardwoods and softwoods, and wood waste or trees that cannot be used for higher-value products are used to produce pulp and paper.

CANADIAN BOREAL FOREST AGREEMENT

On May 18, 2010, the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC) and nine leading environmental organizations announced the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement. The agreement applies to 72 million hectares (177.9 million acres) of public forests under tenure to FPAC members across Canada. The agreement applies to 9.8 million hectares (24.2 million acres) of boreal forest tenures held by FPAC members in B.C.

The agreement establishes six goals for the parties dealing with enhanced forest practices, protected areas, species at risk, climate change, forest sector prosperity, and marketplace recognition.

The FPAC forest companies committed to suspend new harvesting and road construction as an interim measure until December 2012 on 29 million hectares (71.7 million acres), 1.4 million hectares in B.C. (3.5 million acres) of boreal forest to allow time for intensive planning to protect endangered caribou. In return, the environmental groups have suspended their marketplace campaigns.

Governments are not signatories to the agreement. FPAC, its member companies, and the nine environmental groups recognize that governments, including First Nation governments, are decision-makers within their jurisdictions, and will be working with governments in order to successfully meet the Agreements goals and objectives.

Additional information is available at www.canadianborealforestagreement.com

About 50% of wood products exported from Canada come from British Columbia's sustainably-managed forests. This publication is part of the 'Forest Facts' series, published by Forestry Innovation Investment. Visit www.naturallywood.com for details.

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British Columbia wood. Sustainable by nature. Innovative by design.