RACHEL CARSON COUNCIL

Fact Sheet

Understanding Logging in Canada's Boreal Forest

HOW MUCH BOREAL FOREST IS LOGGED?

Logging is the single largest disturbance affecting Canada's Boreal Forest. While the boreal covers more than one billion acres, vast areas continue to be clear-cut each year.

Nearly three-quarters of Canada's forested land is boreal forest. Of the boreal region managed for industrial forestry—an area of roughly 400 million acres, about the size of Alaska—**61% has already been clear-cut at least once (Figure 1)**. That's an area larger than Texas and Colorado combined.

Some individual logging tenure areas granted by the Canadian government are themselves larger than several U.S. states.

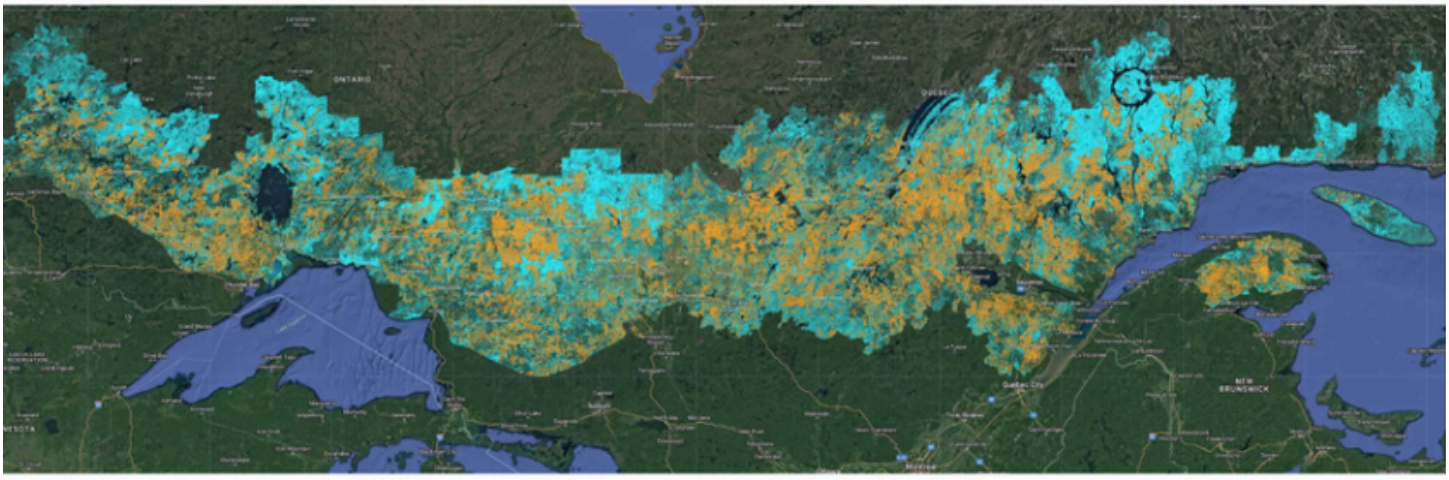

FIGURE 1: *The orange patches show areas that have been logged in Ontario and Quebec since 1976. Turquoise indicated areas where the forest is at least 100 years old. Source: Griffith Climate Action Beacon, Griffith University*

HOW FAST IS LOGGING HAPPENING?

About **1 million acres** of Boreal Forest are clear-cut every year.

That means that each second an area of forest roughly the size of a tennis court may be clear-cut. Each minute, this can grow to about a football field (including end zones). Over a single day, this is similar to the size of a small national park, or 30 times the size of Gateway Arch National Park in Missouri.

HOW MANY TREES ARE BEING CUT?

A typical acre of medium-density boreal forest contains between **243 and 567** trees.

At current logging rates, this would roughly translate to around **243 million to 567 million trees cut every year.**

To put that in perspective, every single person in the United States would need to cut down at least one tree this year to equal that total.

FIGURE 2: *A skidder is used to clear forest and move logs.*

WHAT IS LOST?

When hundreds of millions to billions of trees are removed each year, the loss is measured not only in acres, but in the habitats that disappear with them. The Canadian boreal forest is **home** to more than 325 species of birds, 85 species of mammals and more than 32,000 species of insects. In addition, one single old growth boreal forest tree is home to trillions of bacteria and microbes.

The loss of 1.4 billion individual trees is uncountable, and unvisualisable, in terms of wildlife habitat lost.

WHY CHOOSE ALTERNATIVE FIBER PRODUCTS?

When it comes to fiber and paper products, consumer choice matters. Twenty-five percent of paper on the export market originates from boreal regions. Some U.S. tissue producers have committed to eliminating deforestation and pivoting toward recycled materials, though the vast majority continue to perpetuate the single-use “tree-to-toilet” pipeline.

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The Rachel Carson Council (RCC), founded in 1965, is the national environmental organization envisioned by Rachel Carson to carry on her work after her death. We promote Carson’s ecological ethic that combines scientific concern for the environment and human health with a sense of wonder and reverence for all forms of life in order to build a more sustainable, just, and peaceful future. The Rachel Carson Council is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. ***www.rachelcarsoncouncil.org***