



INDICATOR: Forest certification

Strategic Direction: Conservation and Sustainable Use

Target: N/A

Theme: Conservation Response – Sustainable Management

Previous version: [Forest certification – 2015](#)

Background Information

Forest certification is an internationally recognized system that provides independent “third party” verification that a forest is well-managed. For this program, a well-managed forest is one that meets the forest certification standards while protecting rare species, wildlife habitat, water quality and other factors that make up a healthy ecosystem.

Forestry is an important industry in Ontario. The Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA) and other policies and regulations require that forests are sustainably managed and conserve biodiversity. Most of Ontario’s managed forests are found in the Ontario Shield Ecozone and are divided into geographic planning areas known as management units. The majority of these forests are publicly owned but are managed by forest companies holding Sustainable Forest Licences. Ontario’s regulated forest management system for Crown lands provides a good basis for forest companies to pursue third party certification.

Forest certification is a tool that promotes well-managed forests in the marketplace. Certification is voluntary, and can apply to public or private lands. Forest certification is generally market driven, with demand for certified products coming from consumers and retailers. A lack of certification does not mean a forest is poorly managed in Ontario as companies are still subject to the CFSA and management of Crown forests is highly regulated by the Ontario government to provide for the sustainable management and use of forest resources. Forests that are certified are required to meet a number of standards and criteria related to a number of sustainable management practices including environmental, social and cultural values, biological diversity, and public education and awareness, etc. The international recognized certification process also helps to raise awareness about sustainable management practices.

In Ontario, there are three types of forest certification:

- Canadian Standards Association (CSA) – A national sustainable forest management standard that has both performance requirements and management system requirements. All CSA certifications require, among other things: recognition of environmental, economic, social and cultural values, conservation of biological diversity, and ongoing public participation;
- Based on six criteria to assess environmental, social and economic benefits: biological diversity, ecosystem condition and productivity, soil and water, role in global ecological cycles, economic and social benefits, and society’s responsibility;
- Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) – Promote responsible forest management by evaluating



forests against [principles](#) of forest management appropriate to local social, ecological and economic conditions. Some of the principles include: compliance with laws, benefits from the forest, indigenous people’s rights, and environmental values and impacts; and

- Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) – Promote sustainable forestry practices based on a number of principles, objectives, performance measures, and Indicators. Some of the principles include: sustainable forestry; protection of water resources, protection of biological diversity; community involvement and social responsibility, training and education, and transparency.

Data Analysis

Forest Certification in Ontario is calculated by tracking the area of the Managed Forest certified under a forest certification management standard. The Managed Forest is an area in the middle of the province where forest management occurs on public land. It has a large quantity of productive forest that is suitable for timber production (MNDMNR 2021).



Figure 1. Managed Forest area in Ontario 2021 (MNDMNR 2021).



All three of the forest certification systems have accredited third party auditors that perform on-site audits to verify that standards are being met. The audit organizations act as the registrars of the program and their websites provide information about the companies and lands they have certified. This information was used to determine the certification status for each management unit (MNDMNR 2021).

The information presented for this indicator represents a summary of the certification indicator from the State of Resource Reporting: Forest Certification in Ontario report MNDMNR 2021).

Results

Trend: No Change **Data Confidence:** Medium **Geographic Extent:** Managed Forest (central and northern Ontario from Kemptonville to Red Lake)

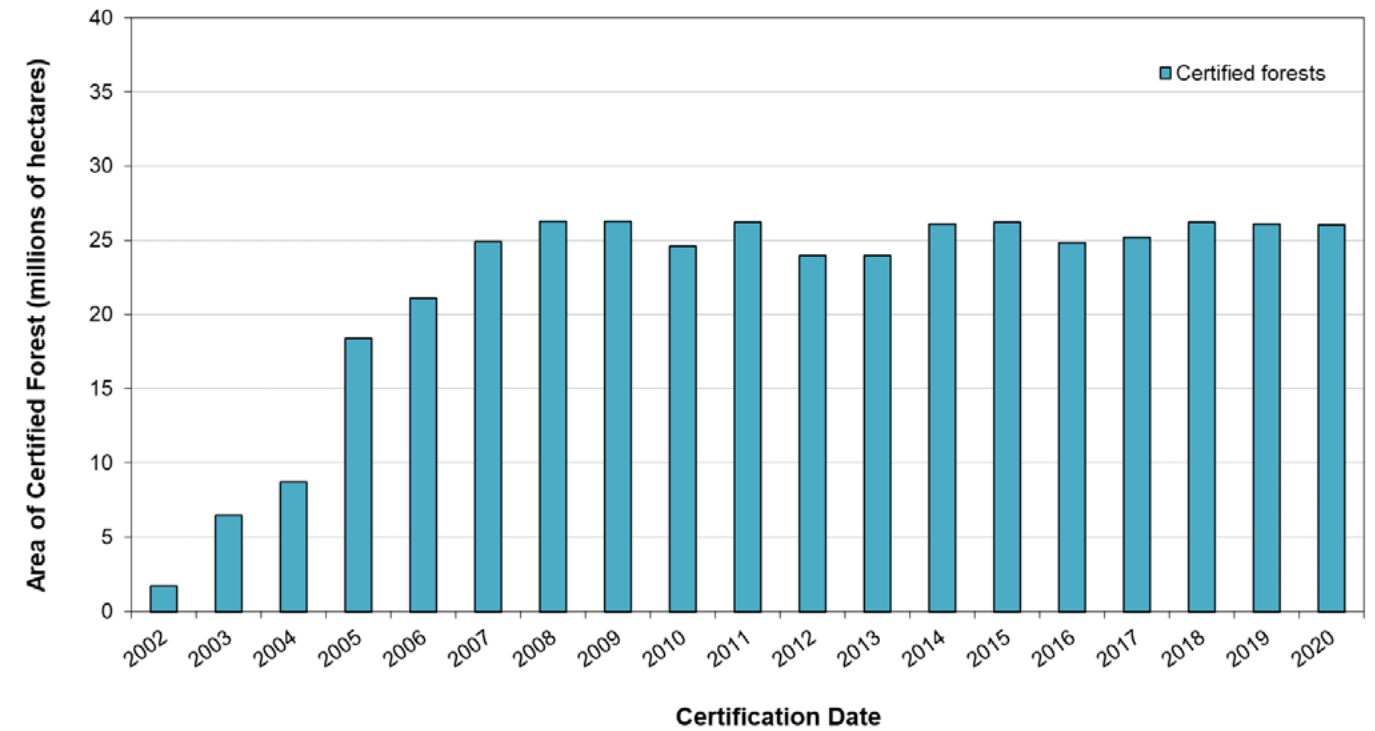


Figure 2. Area of managed forest under forest certification (2002–2020) (MNDMNR 2021).

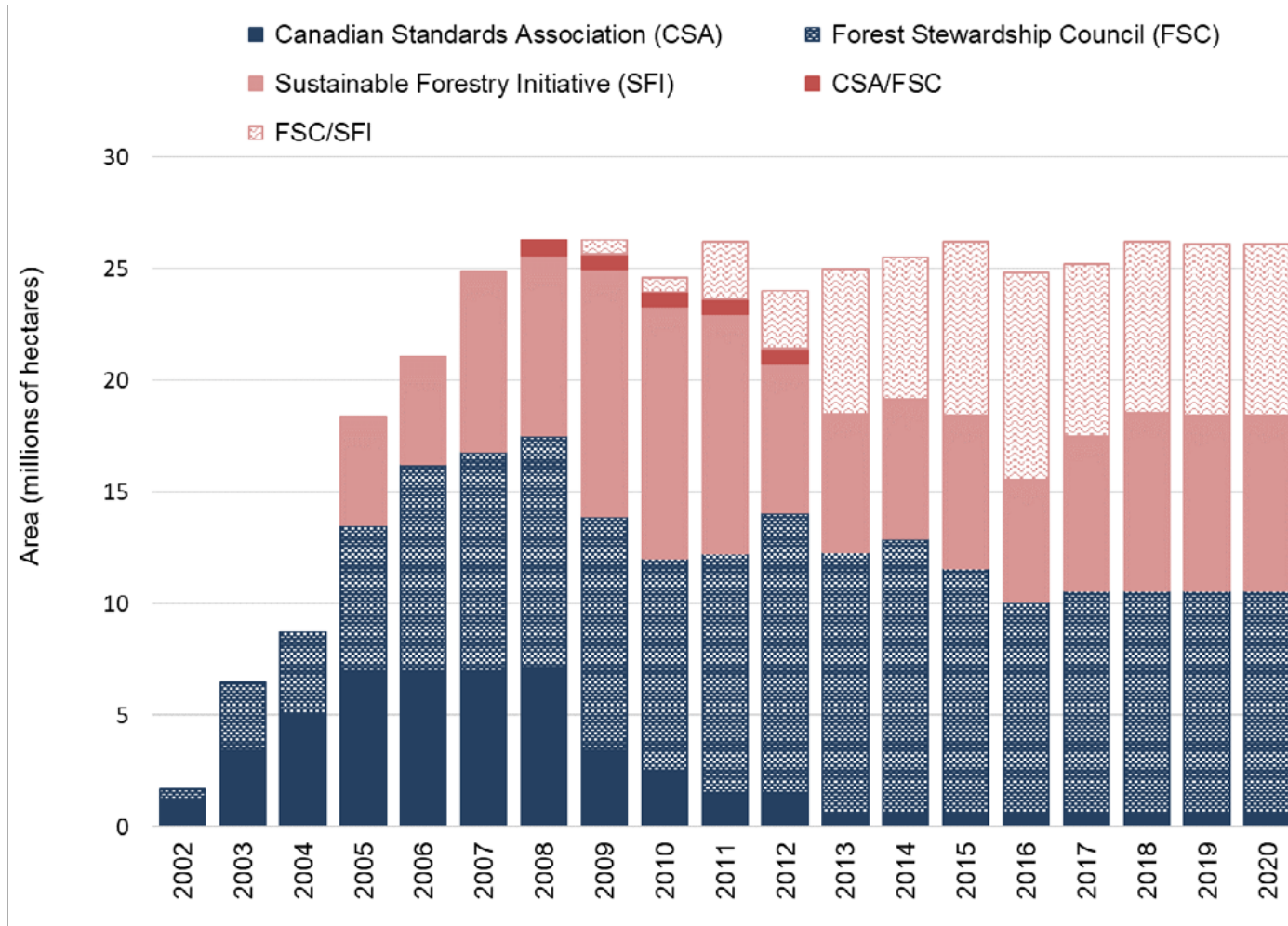


Figure 3. Management units certified and related certification system from 2002 to 2020 (MNDMNR 2021).

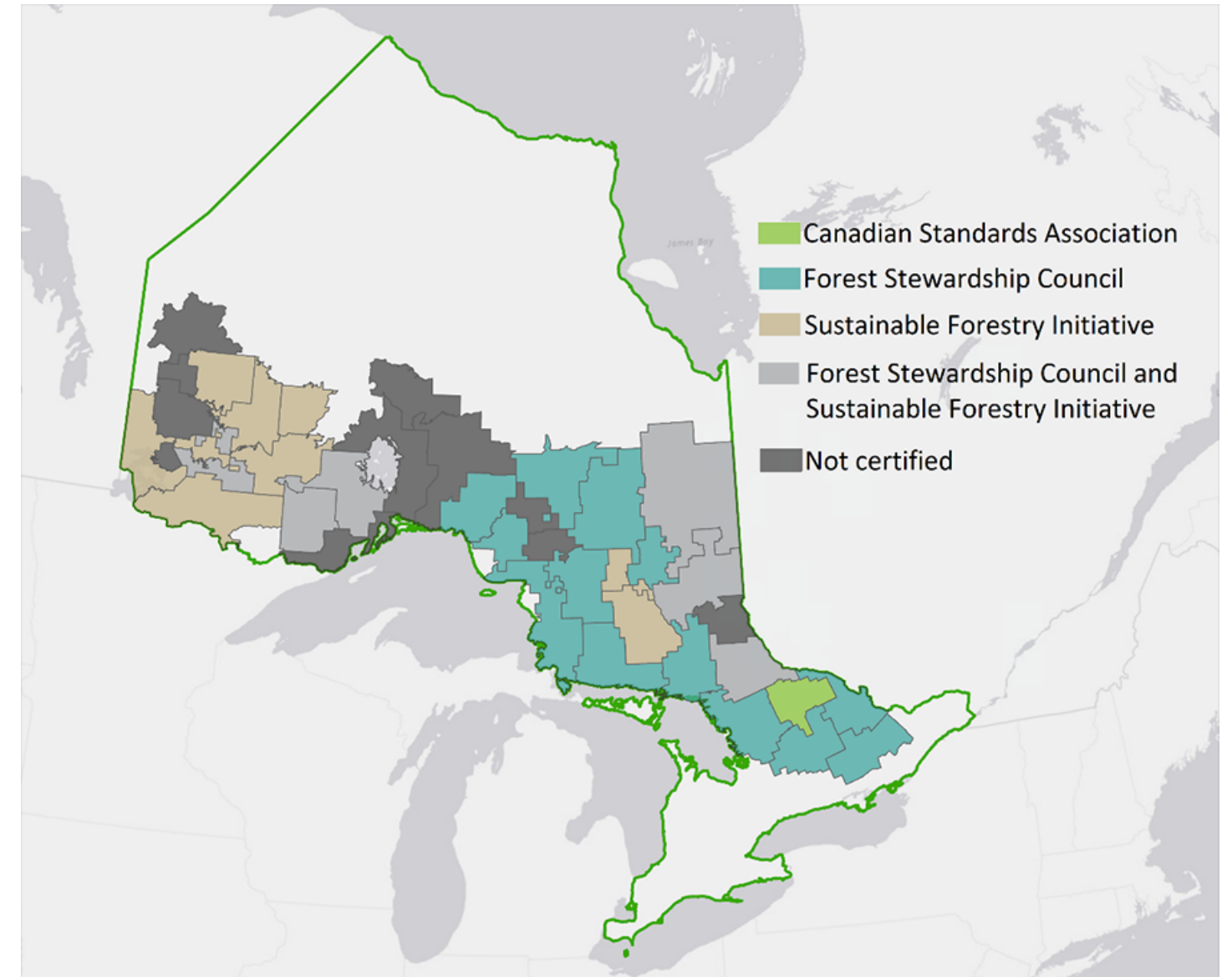


Figure 4. Type of certification for each management unit. Thirteen are certified to FSC, 9 to SFI, 6 have dual FSC and SFI certification, 1 is CSA, and 10 are not certified (MNDMNR 2021).

Status

- Between 2002–2008 the Forest Products Association of Canada required their members to become certified leading to an increase in certifications. Since then numbers have remained relatively stable.
- As of December 2020, a total of 26.1 million hectares were certified — 29 out of 39 management units in the province, equating to 77% of the Public lands and waters within management units. The last SOBR report showed 24 million ha in 2013.



Links

Related Targets: N/A

Related Themes: Conservation and Sustainable Use – Area under sustainable management systems

Web Links

Canadian Standards Association (CSA) <http://www.csasfmforests.ca>

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) <https://ca.fsc.org>

State of Ontario's Natural Resources – Forests - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/state-ontarios-natural-resources-forest-2021#certification>

Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) <http://www.sfiprogram.org>

Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) <http://www.pefccanada.org>

MNR – Forests <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/Forests/index.html>

Forest Products Association of Canada - Forest Certification <http://www.certificationcanada.org/english/index.php>

Forest Products Association of Canada – Publications <http://www.fpac.ca/index.php/en/publications>

Sustainable Forest Management in Canada <http://www.sfmcanada.org/>

Ontario Wood <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/en/Business/OntarioWood/index.html>

Sustainable Forestry Initiative — 2015–2019 Standards and rules Section 2 https://forests.org/wp-content/uploads/2015_2019StandardsandRules_Section2_June2019.pdf

References

Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry, 2021. State of Ontario's Natural Resources – Forests 2021. Queen's Printer for Ontario. Sault Ste. Marie, ON. [Available at: <https://files.ontario.ca/ndmnr-f-state-of-ontarios-natural-resources-forest-2021-en-09-16.pdf>]

Citation

Ontario Biodiversity Council. 2021. State of Ontario's Biodiversity [web application]. Ontario Biodiversity Council, Peterborough, Ontario. [Available at: <http://ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca/sobr> (Updated: December 21, 2021)].