



INDICATOR: FOREST CERTIFICATION

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: Conservation and Sustainable Use

TARGET: N/A

THEME: Conservation Response – Sustainable Management

Background Information:

Forest certification is an internationally recognized program that provides independent “third party” verification that a forest is well-managed. For this program, a well-managed forest is one that meets the audited forest certification standards that allows for trees to be harvested for a number of uses 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 market place. Certification is granted by independent auditors, 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.

In Ontario, there are three types of forest certification:

- Canadian Standards Association (CSA) - 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) - Evaluates forests against ten principles of forest management appropriate to local social, ecological and economic conditions. Some of the principles include: compliance with laws, indigenous people’s rights, and environmental values and impacts; and
- Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) - Uses 14 principles and 20 objectives to certify well-managed forests. Some of the principles are: sustainable forestry; protection of biological diversity; public involvement; and transparency.

Some Crown forests are being certified for the first time but economic challenges in the forestry industry has resulted in a slight net loss of certified forests. Levels of certification and interest in the



program may increase as forest certification becomes a more integral part of the Ontario forest industry's business practice (OMNR 2014).

Data Analysis:

Forest Certification in Ontario is calculated by tracking the area of Crown forest in the AOU certified under a forest certification management standard.

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. Source data for the status of Forest Certification come from the audit organizations.

The information presented for this indicator represents a summary of the *State of Resource Reporting: Forest Certification in Ontario* report (OMNR 2014).

Results:

Trend: Deterioration **Data Confidence:** High **Geographic Extent:** Area of Crown Forests

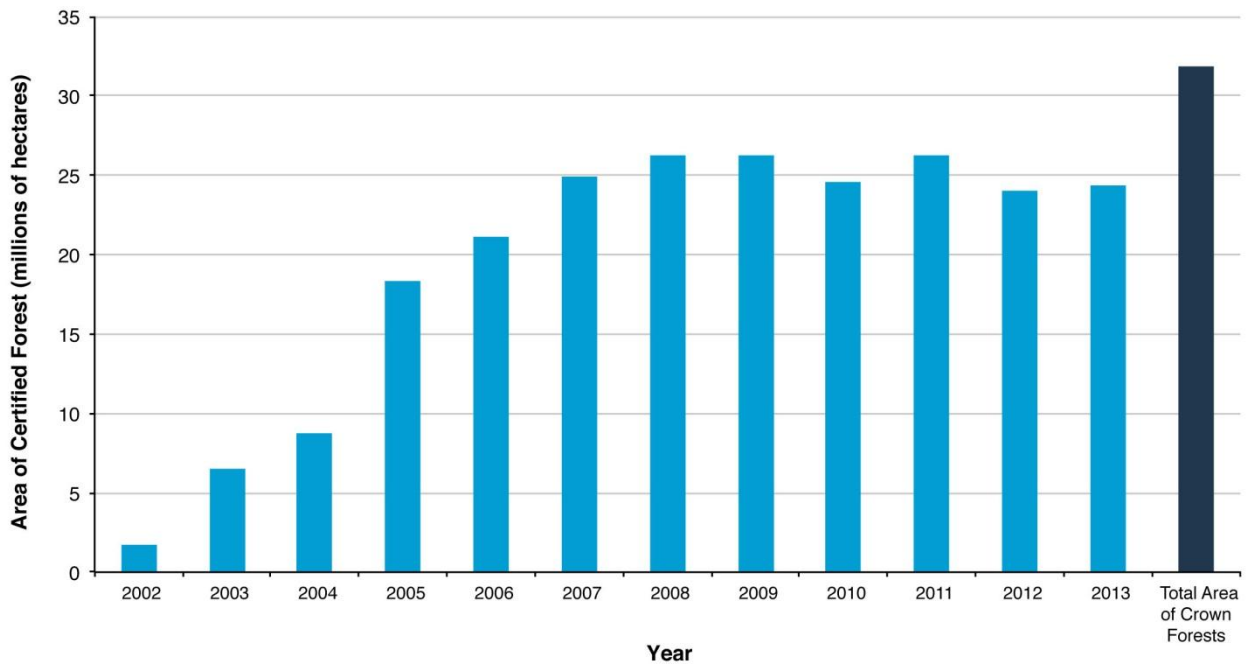


Figure 1. Area of managed forest under forest certification (2002 – 2013) compared with total area of licensed forest (OMNR 2014).



Forest Certification

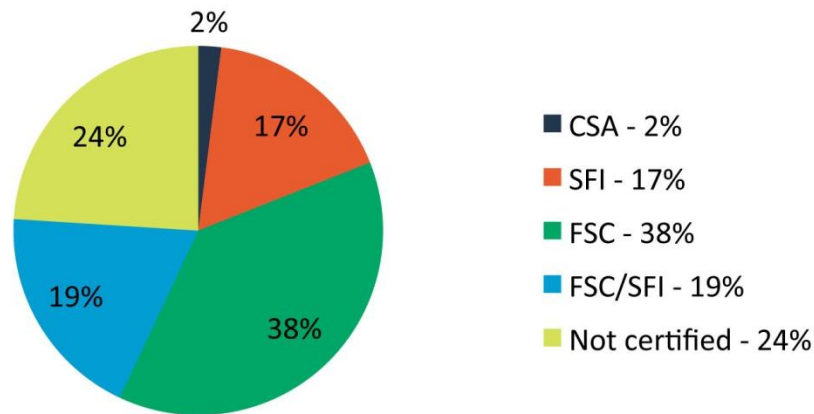


Figure 2. Percent of management units certified under each standard in 2013 (OMNR 2014).

Status:

- In 2013, 24 million ha of Ontario's 32 million ha of managed Crown forests were certified (76%). This is a 7% reduction in forest area certified since 2008.
- Forest certification increased dramatically between 2002 when programs were first available and 2008.
- The reduction in certified forests since 2008 is generally due to economic challenges faced by the Ontario forest industry in recent years, mainly as a result of company bankruptcies (OMNR 2014).

Links:

Related Targets: N/A

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

Web Links:

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

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

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

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>

References:

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR). 2014. State of resources reporting: Forest certification in Ontario. Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Peterborough, ON. [Available at: <http://www.ontario.ca/document/forest-certification>]

Citation

Ontario Biodiversity Council. 2015. State of Ontario's Biodiversity [web application]. Ontario Biodiversity Council, Peterborough, Ontario. [Available at: <http://ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca/sobr> (Date Accessed: May 19, 2015)].