



New Global Forest Watch satellite data analysis reveals areas of forest loss in the Yellowstone to Yukon region

Greatest forest loss in British Columbia and Alberta due to logging and oil and gas activities

Edmonton, November 12, 2014. Using new satellite data, Global Forest Watch Canada conducted a “first-look” analysis of forest extent and forest change, both loss and gain, for the period 2000-2012 for the Yellowstone to Yukon region (Y2Y).

“Y2Y welcomes this new tool for tracking ecosystem changes in the Yellowstone to Yukon region,” says Karsten Heuer, Y2Y’s President. “It will be especially important for monitoring permanent losses of forested land and for pointing out where this could have negative impacts on ecosystem health.”

“The good news is that the entire area of Y2Y incurred a net forest loss of 2.4% during this period, an amount substantially less than for Canada as a whole,” said Peter Lee, Executive Director of Global Forest Watch Canada. “The bad news is that there are substantial regional differences between the North, Central and South zones of Y2Y, with the Central zone exhibiting significantly more net forest loss during the 2000 to 2012 period.”

The Central zone of Y2Y is within the Canadian provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. Its net forest loss was double that of the North zone and over 50% more than that of the South zone. The South zone is in the United States.

Lee continued, “As well as the Canadian provinces of Alberta and British Columbia exhibiting more net loss in Y2Y’s Central zone than in the United States South zone of Y2Y, the cause of that forest loss in Canada is mainly due to industrialization, whereas the cause of the forest loss in the United States South zone of Y2Y is mostly fires.”

Lee concludes, “Global Forest Watch (globalforestwatch.org) uses the latest research and satellite data to provide a whole new opportunity for forest monitoring. We can now produce maps and analysis of where forest change is occurring throughout the Yellowstone to Yukon Region. Monitoring of the Y2Y region should continue using this freely available and constantly updated new satellite technology. Results of the monitoring should be integrated into strategic planning efforts and strategic decisions regarding research, consultations and outreach for the Y2Y region.”

For more information, go to globalforestwatch.ca and globalforestwatch.org

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