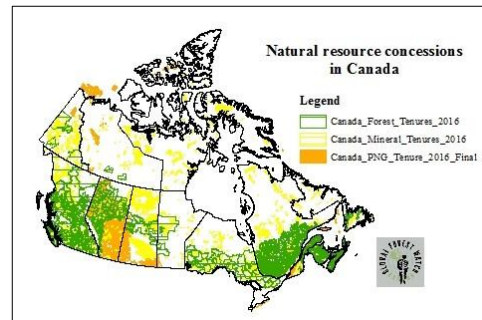




Global Forest Watch Canada



Public Lands, Public Geospatial data: Some Jurisdictions Lag Behind

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Many governments in Canada have committed to open government, and open data. However, these commitments have not yet resulted in comprehensive availability of open geospatial datasets on how governments allocate public lands and sub-surface resources. An analysis conducted by Global Forest Watch Canada (GFWC) found that not all provinces and territories have publicly available open datasets on forestry, mineral, and petroleum/natural gas concessions.

“Given most lands and sub-surfaces resources in Canada are public, it seems reasonable to assume datasets about them should be available for review and use by Canadians as a whole, and by affected communities,” said Wynet Smith, Executive Director of GFWC. “The availability of data is particularly important for Indigenous communities that have land rights and title interests in those lands and resources.”

GFWC had to request over half of forestry concession datasets via email. While mineral and petroleum datasets are more readily available on-line, they tend to have more restrictions on use/re-use, with petroleum/natural gas datasets the most restricted. Some provinces – such as Newfoundland and Labrador have no completely open geospatial datasets, despite having an open government commitment and an open data licence.

“Our assessment shows that there are many open geospatial datasets for forestry, mining, and petroleum/natural gas concessions,” said Smith. “However, many datasets are not truly open data as governments require users request datasets via email, or add restrictions on use and redistribution.”

The analysis conducted is available in a report, *Open Data Assessment of Geospatial Concession Datasets in Canada*. GFWC has made its national datasets available on-line and under open data licences. These products are all available on the GFWC website at: www.globalforestwatch.ca.

“Governments in Canada have made important steps towards creating open data on natural resource concessions. We’re very hopeful that our analysis, report, and recommendations can help government understand further the needs of citizens and civil society groups, and make their datasets available as completely open data,” said Smith.

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