



**NEWS RELEASE**  
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## **Large logging companies' control of public forest lands growing**

*Logging rates also on the increase*

**Edmonton** -- A handful of large forestry companies control logging rights over vast areas of Canada's publicly-owned forest lands, says a new report from Global Forest Watch Canada released today. The report, which examines how rights to log public forests are allocated to private companies across the country, finds that corporate consolidation in the forestry sector has led to larger and larger companies controlling more and more publicly-owned forests.

"Just five companies -- Tembec, Abitibi-Consolidated, Slocan/Canfor, Louisiana-Pacific and Tolko -- hold licences for forest management areas totalling well over 100 million hectares of public forest land, an area larger than the province of Ontario or the province of British Columbia," notes Peter Lee, National Coordinator for Global Forest Watch Canada. "In the last three years alone, the area controlled by the largest forest companies has increased by close to 10%," Lee adds.

Companies holding what is often referred to as "tenure" over public forests, agree to take on forestry planning and management responsibilities in return for the right to cut trees in designated areas, Lee explains. These tenure agreements are often long-term -- for 20 years or more -- and are frequently automatically renewed, giving companies long-term control over huge areas of publicly-owned forest.

"Our report also finds that the amount of logging on publicly-owned land each year is also rising, jumping 50% since 1975," Lee continues. Most of this logging increase has occurred in the boreal forest region, one of the world's largest remaining areas of intact forest.

"But the increase in logging activity has not led to an equivalent increase in jobs for Canadians," he continues. In the 1990-2001 period, the annual area logged in Canada rose by 12% (901,642 ha to 1,011,261 ha) while employment in the forestry sector rose only 4% (339,000 to 353,000). Due to changes in productivity, the number of jobs needed to cut more forestland area is declining (2.7 hectares were cut for every forest sector job in 1990 and 2.9 hectares were cut for every forest job in 2001).

“The trends identified in the report underscore the importance of determining, through good information and public consultation, the levels of logging that are sustainable in the long-term, especially taking into account the full range of forest uses valued by Canadians – from recreational pursuits to supporting small businesses. We just don’t know enough right now about how the tremendous growth in logging rates, mostly in previously uncut forests, is affecting our ecosystems,” says Lee.

Some findings from the Global Forest Watch report include:

- The three companies with the highest total allowable annual cut (AAC) allocations are Weyerhaeuser, Abitibi-Consolidated, and Slocan/Canfor.
- Five companies -- Tembec, Abitibi-Consolidated, Slocan/Canfor (these two companies announced a merger in November 2003), Louisiana-Pacific, and Tolko -- hold tenures within forest management areas totalling well over 100 million hectares of public forest land, an area larger than the province of Ontario or the province of British Columbia.
- The largest area logged annually is in Québec, followed by British Columbia and Ontario.
- The largest volume of timber is cut in British Columbia, followed by Québec and Ontario.
- Together, 70% of the volume and 79% of the area logged in all of Canada is from or in these three provinces.
- The provinces that have experienced the greatest proportional increases in annual area logged between 1975 and 2001 are Alberta (214 percent increase), Prince Edward Island (206 percent increase), Newfoundland and Labrador (176 percent) increase, and Québec (123 percent increase).
- The provinces that have experienced the greatest overall increases in annual area logged between 1975 and 2001 are Québec (approximately 167,000 ha increase), British Columbia (47,000 ha increase), and Alberta (46,000 ha increase).

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The Global Forest Watch Canada report, *Canada’s Commercial Forest Tenures*, and associated forest tenure datasets, are available for download on the GFWC website:  
<http://www.globalforestwatch.ca>

**Global Forest Watch Canada** was formed to provide access to more complete information about development activities in Canada’s forests and their environmental impacts. We are convinced that providing greater information about Canada’s forests will lead to better decision-making on forest management and use, which ultimately will result in forest management regimes that provide a full range of benefits for both present and future generations.