



***Before and After* Satellite Imagery Reveals Striking Picture of Human-Caused Changes to Québec's Boreal Forest**

EDMONTON, February 9, 2006 – The results of the first complete survey to date of logging, road building, reservoir construction and other human disturbances in Québec's northern forests reveals that the Boreal region in Québec is being rapidly impacted over a wide area, mostly by logging, but also by roads and reservoirs. The study, *Recent Anthropogenic Changes within the Northern Boreal, Southern Taiga and Hudson Plains*

Ecozones of Québec, was undertaken using extensive satellite imagery and analysis and was released today by Global Forest Watch Canada (GFWC).

“Knowing the location and, more importantly, the rate of development in our forests will help to improve forest management. In this study, we identified all disturbances to Québec's northern forests that were caused by humans in the 1990s –an area of almost a million square kilometers or about 60% of Québec. It is one of the largest national projects ever conducted to describe the location and rate of the development of our forests,” said Peter Lee, Executive Director of GFWC, adding that the group hopes to expand the project to all of Canada.

The GFWC analysis covered forest changes across several ecological regions and found some dramatic results. In one 628,000 ha watershed, 132,000 ha (27% of the forests in the watershed) were logged and roaded over the course of an 11 year period. In one northern Cree (*Eeyou Istchee*) trapline area, over 60% of the forest (16,539 ha) was logged over a period of 12 years. The largest contiguous logged and roaded area that was impacted over a similar 11 year period is a boreal forest area of almost 150,000 ha in size.

“To complete this project, we performed computer analysis and visual checking of satellite imagery over an eight month period in 2005,” said Zoran Stanojevic of GFWC, the senior author of the report. “We invited over 100 forest companies, government staff, environmental groups and academics to review our work, and we also performed detailed accuracy assessments by conducting on-the-ground field checks and using data provided by the government of Québec.”

“GFWC's analysis covers a period during which the Grand Council of the Cree (*Eeyou Istchee*) began a legal fight over forestry with Québec. The logging and other disturbances that their study identifies are what pushed us to negotiate for a new forestry regime in our territory. These new findings about the area will help both parties in our pursuit of sustainability in the territory,” said Bill Namagoose, Executive Director of the Grand Council of the Crees (*Eeyou Istchee*).

“This study underscores the urgent need for conservation of the Boreal – one of the world's greatest, but time-limited, conservation opportunities as industrial development is expanding rapidly and moving north across the region,” said Cathy Wilkinson, Director of the Canadian Boreal Initiative. “Today's announcement reinforces that now is the time to take stock, to make sure that land use decisions today and in the future are balancing protection of ecological and social/cultural values with other interest and activities in the region.”

Other significant findings of the GFWC study include:

- Within Québec's Boreal, Taiga and Hudson Plains Forest regions, recent anthropogenic change is concentrated in the zone allocated for commercial logging;
 - Within Québec's Boreal Forest region, recent anthropogenic change is concentrated in the southern portion;
 - The major recent anthropogenic change within Québec's Boreal Forest region is clearcut logging, although there is also substantial change resulting from reservoir construction and road construction;
 - There are large portions of the northern portion of Québec's Boreal Forest region that remain unaffected by recent anthropogenic change;
 - The major recent anthropogenic change within Québec's Taiga Forest region is reservoir construction;
 - Within Québec's smaller ecological and administrative units, the amount of recent anthropogenic change between units can vary substantially, with some units having no sign of recent anthropogenic change and other units having very extensive change.
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The Global Forest Watch Canada report, *Recent Anthropogenic Changes within the Northern Boreal, Southern Taiga, and Hudson Plains Ecozones of Québec*, and associated forest change spatial datasets, are available for download on the GFWC website: 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.

The Canadian Boreal Initiative is an independent organization working with conservation organizations, Aboriginal peoples, industry and others to link science, policy and conservation activities in Canada's Boreal region. In 2003, CBI convened the Boreal Leadership Council, an extraordinary group of conservation organizations, First Nations and resource companies and launched the Boreal Forest Conservation Framework – a balanced vision for protection and sustainable development of Canada's vast Boreal region. For more information visit www.borealcanada.ca