



Two-thirds of Nova Scotia's intact forests lack protection

New study identifies Chignecto area among important forest conservation opportunities

EDMONTON, November 26, 2010 -- A new study of Nova Scotia forests shows that 17 per cent of the province remains as intact treed landscapes larger than 500 hectares. Another 4.5 per cent of the province is covered by naturally treeless, intact landscapes.

"The vast majority of these intact landscapes are on crown land," says Ryan Cheng of Global Forest Watch Canada, the lead author of the report. "Only 34 per cent fall within existing protected areas, however, which leaves significant opportunities for further conservation successes in Nova Scotia."

The study also found that most of Nova Scotia's intact landscapes are in blocks larger than 1,000 hectares in size.

"There are several opportunities in Nova Scotia to protect large intact landscapes of more than 20,000 hectares," says Cheng. "One of the most important is in the Chignecto area near the New Brunswick border, which has no formal protected areas at present within the potential zone of intact forest landscapes."

Other opportunities for protecting large intact landscapes center around existing protected areas. The largest blocks are in the Tobeatic-Southwest Nova area and in the Cape Breton Highlands.

"When developing a protected areas network, it is necessary to understand which natural areas are of high importance," says Peter Lee, co-author of the study and executive director of Global Forest Watch Canada. "One measure to consider is the presence of intact landscapes, which we define as a contiguous mosaic of naturally occurring ecosystems that are essentially undisturbed by significant human influence. An intact forest landscape does not necessarily consist of old-growth trees, and it may not even be entirely forested -- it may consist of a mosaic of natural ecosystems including forest, bog, water, tundra and rock outcrops."

The study also found that Annapolis, Guysborough and Shelburne counties had the greatest loss of intact forest landscape blocks. Between 2000 and 2007, the total area of intact forest landscapes in blocks of more than 1,000 hectares declined by over 42,000 hectares in those counties.

"This is an important opportunity for Nova Scotians to take a national leadership role in how they approach conservation aspects of forest management," says Lee.

The new report, *Nova Scotia's Intact Forest Landscapes: Opportunities for Conservation Planning*, is the eighth of several publications in celebration of Global Forest Watch Canada's 10th anniversary year and of the International Year of Biodiversity. It is intended as a contribution to the processes underway in Nova Scotia to protect 12 per cent of the province by 2015.

Download the research paper [here](#).

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