
Landmark Conservation Plan to Protect 55 Million Acres in Canada's Boreal Forest

On July 14, 2008, Ontario's Premier, Dalton McGuinty, announced a commitment to protect of over 55 million acres of Canada's Boreal Forest, one of the largest conservation commitments in history.



Photo Courtesy Wildlands League

Scale of Area to Be Protected

- 55 million acres; 87,000 square miles; 225,000 square kilometers.
- Ontario's commitment to protect 55 million acres will be larger than: 40 of the 50 U.S. states, including New York, Florida, and Washington State.
- Larger than 60% of the world's nations and almost as large as the United Kingdom.
- Larger than all the officially designated wilderness areas in the lower 48.
- Ontario's Northern Boreal region is 43 per cent of Ontario's land mass; more than half of this would be protected in an interconnected network of conservation lands.
- Ontario's portion of the Boreal Forest extends from the northern limits of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest to the Hudson Bay Lowlands.
- Ontario's Boreal Forest is part of Canada's 1.4 billion acre Boreal Forest that is one of the world's largest remaining intact ecosystems.

Wildlife in Ontario's Boreal Forest

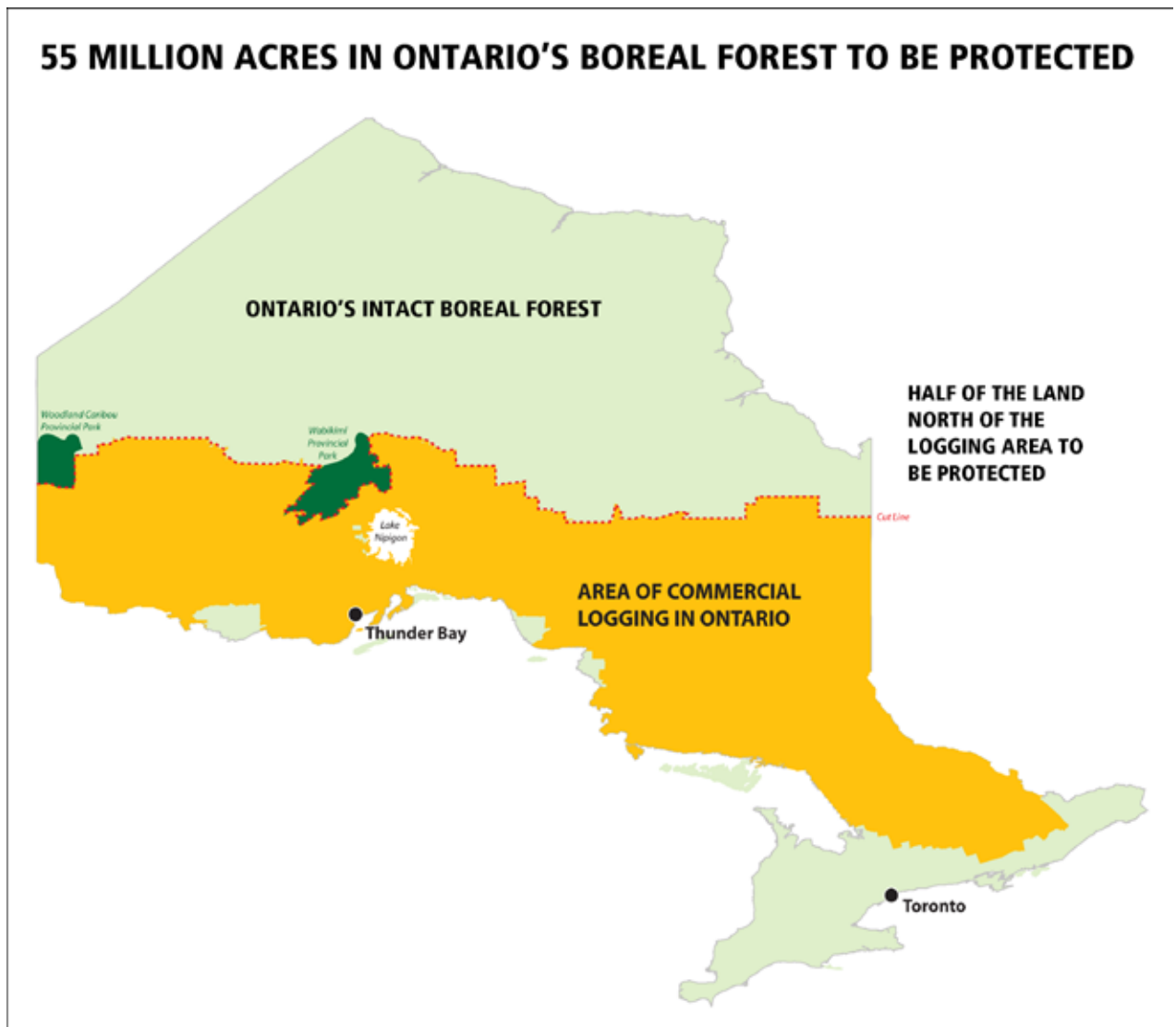
- Ontario's Boreal Forest is vital habitat for hundreds of millions of migratory birds, many of which nest in the Boreal.
- Ontario's Northern Boreal Forest is home to over 200 sensitive species of animals, many of which are threatened or endangered, such as White Pelican, woodland caribou, wolverine, and polar bear.
- Species are at risk due to a number of reasons. These include habitat loss, pollution, land use and resource management activities, as well as the spread of invasive species.
- Extinction rates increase as the number of stresses for wildlife increases. Scientists recognize that if we ensure large, connected, natural habitats in the Boreal Forest, we may help limit extinctions; wildlife will have a better chance of avoiding extinction if they don't also face habitat loss and fragmentation. Conserving intact ecosystems will help stabilize microclimates, slow changes in forest type, and facilitate species migration in response to changing conditions.

Land Protection Helps Mitigate Global Warming

- Ontario's Boreal Forest is a globally significant carbon storehouse and permanently protecting these lands will help shield us from global warming.
- The region absorbs approximately 12.5 million tons of CO₂ from our atmosphere each year.

Ontario's Boreal Forest is Home to Aboriginal Communities

- It is home to 24,000 people living in 36 communities.
- Communities retain strong ties to the land and traditional food gathering and other land-use activities remain important.
- Most communities are not accessible by road.



**INTERNATIONAL
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