

KEY BOREAL FACTS INSPIRED BY CCFM 2010 ⁱAND NRCAN 2010ⁱⁱ

Boreal Forest

Encircling the earth's Northern Hemisphere just south of the Arctic Circle, this green mantle of mainly coniferous forest comprises about 16.6 million square kilometres, or roughly one-third of the planet's forested area. Russia is the custodian of the largest portion of the boreal, containing just under 60 per cent of this woodland, while Canada's share is close to 30 per cent. The Scandinavian countries account for nearly 10 per cent, with the remainder existing in China, the United States (Alaska) and some other northern countries.

Canada's Boreal Forest

In Canada, the boreal region stretches across the top of the country, starting in the Yukon and northeastern British Columbia, and stretching across the northern parts of Quebec, Ontario and the Prairie provinces, to Labrador and Newfoundland. It forms a band more than 1000 kilometres wide between the frozen tundra of the Arctic to the north and the more temperate forests and grasslands to the south.

Quick Facts

- Canada's boreal region stretches from the Yukon to Newfoundland.
- The boreal forest represents 77% of Canada's forests and woodlands.
- Canada's boreal forest is estimated at 307 million hectares in size.
- 2.5 million people live in the boreal region.
- The boreal region contains an estimated 1.5 million lakes.

The region has an abundance of wildlife and fresh water (including an estimated 1.5 million lakes), and some of the world's richest deposits of natural resources. It is home to half of Canada's 450 bird species and a wide range of mammals, including moose, wolves, caribou, bears, rodents, rabbits, lynx and mink.

More than 2.5 million people live in Canada's boreal region. Hundreds of rural and remote communities rely heavily on the forest and other natural resources for jobs and economic stability. Aboriginal people, who were the original human inhabitants of the boreal region, continue to look to the forest as a means of livelihood and a source of cultural and spiritual sustenance.

While forestry is the mainstay of many boreal region communities, other resource-based economic activities also take place in the region. These include large-scale industries such as hydro development, mining, and oil and gas extraction, and smaller-scale operations such as hunting, trapping, fishing, tourism and recreation. The harvesting of non-timber forest products such as herbs, conifer boughs and berries, is an increasingly important contributor to local and national economies, and one of Canada's fastest-growing forest exports.

The forest industry makes an important contribution to Canada's economy, yet less than 1% of its commercial forest area is harvested each year, and those companies that harvest public lands must return them to healthy forest.

Canada has a vital interest in managing its northern woodlands in a sustainable manner. Canada's conservation efforts in the boreal forest include integrated land-use planning, environmentally sound forest management practices, species and habitat recovery, and tax incentives.

A key component of these efforts is protected areas. Protected areas are important for safeguarding biodiversity, conducting scientific research, environmental monitoring, and maintaining environmental stability in surrounding regions. They also provide opportunities for outdoor activities such as hiking, camping and nature viewing, which are important to millions of Canadians.

ⁱ http://www.sfmcanada.org/english/bp_overview.asp

ⁱⁱ <http://canadaforests.nrcan.gc.ca/article/canadaborealforest>