WWF

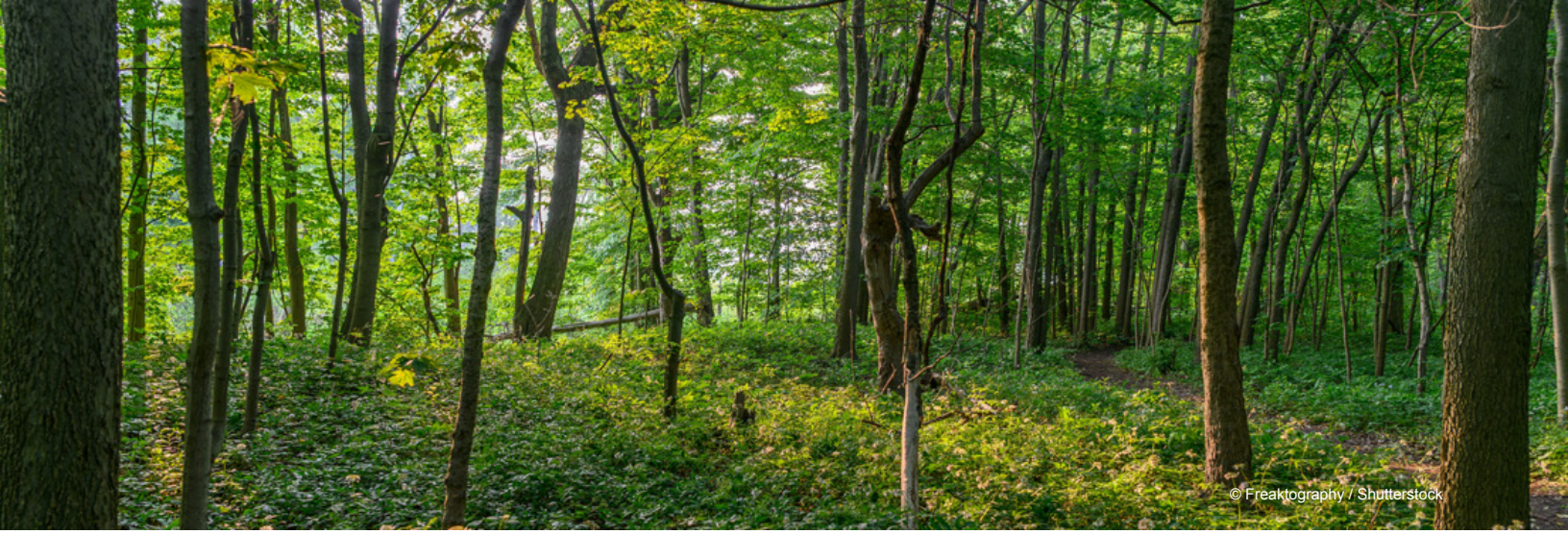
QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE:

SOURCING FROM FOREST TENURES IN CANADA – A RISK ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

Canada has the third-largest forest area in the world and is a leading global producer of forest products such as lumber, pulp, and paper. Growing concerns about climate change and biodiversity loss have led to increased scrutiny of forest practices in Canada, highlighting potential risks for companies sourcing Canadian forest products.

Forest tenures are agreements that identify who is responsible for using, managing and making decisions about forest resources. Access to information on the risks associated with sourcing wood from forest tenures helps actors throughout the supply chain take steps to avoid or reduce those risks.



WHAT IS THE FOREST TENURE RISK ANALYSIS?

The forest tenure risk analysis is a map-based tool that estimates the level of environmental risk associated with sourcing wood from forest tenures in Canada. The tool uses publicly available data to produce risk scores for a range of environmental values that companies may want to consider when making sourcing decisions:

- **Forest cover as measured by forest loss**

  Due to fire: How much of the forest in a tenure has burned in a forest fire?

  From non-fire disturbance: How much of the forest in a tenure has been lost through other disturbances such as logging, insects and diseases?

- **Protected areas:** What proportion of each ecodistrict within a tenure is classified as a protected area? (An ecodistrict is a geographic area defined by its unique geology, soil and climate.)

- **Intact forest landscapes (IFLs):** IFLs are large landscapes that are mostly untouched by humans. Are there IFLs within the tenure? If so, how much of the tenure do they occupy and has any IFL area been lost between 2013 and 2020?

- **Carbon storage:** How much carbon is stored above and below ground in the tenure?

- **Terrestrial species at risk:** What proportion of preferred habitat for species at risk is within the tenure?

- **Woodland caribou:** How much of the tenure overlaps with the ranges of boreal and mountain ecotypes of woodland caribou and how much of those ranges have been disturbed by nature (e.g., fire, insects) and humans?

WHO IS IT FOR?

This analysis is intended for companies sourcing forest products from Canada.

WHAT DOES IT DO?

The tool supplements WWF's sourcing guidance for Canada[1] by helping companies to better understand the potential risks associated with sourcing forest products from specific forest tenures or groups of tenures. The analysis assigns a risk score to each tenure for each value from zero (lowest risk) to four (highest risk). The tool is meant to be a starting point for exploring the values behind responsible sourcing and for guiding discussions on how to reduce sourcing risks.

[1] See WWF Guidance for companies sourcing wood and fibre from Canada (2025).

WHAT DOES IT NOT DO?

The analysis does not provide a comprehensive assessment of all environmental and social risks associated with sourcing forest products from Canada. As examples, the tool does not account for the rights of Indigenous Peoples, watershed health or aquatic species. As such, the tool should be considered a first step towards understanding risk.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

To use the tool, companies will need to know which facilities (e.g., mills) they are purchasing from, and which tenures supply wood to those facilities.

Companies can then access risk estimates for each value across their tenures of interest. These risk scores can then be used as a basis for further conversation and analysis.

SAMPLE RESULTS

Here are the results for a sawmill in Ontario, Canada that sources wood from six tenures (Figure 1).

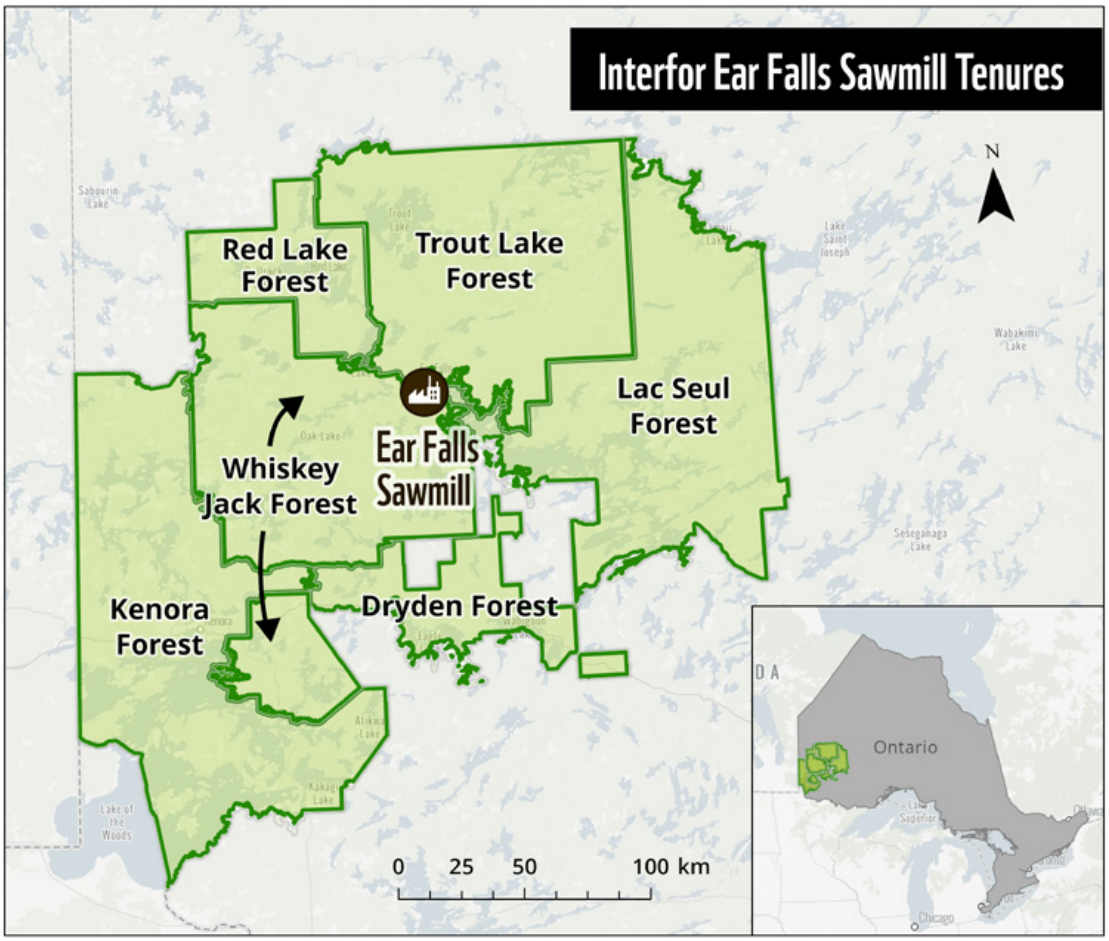


Figure 1. The six tenures supplying wood to the Interfor sawmill in Ear Falls, Ontario, Canada. Source: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

The tool provides the risk scores for each value in each tenure (Table 1). In this example, five out of six tenures have the highest risk score of four (4) for at least one value, and the Kenora Forest tenure has the highest overall risk score.

TENURE NAME	Forest Loss - Fire	Forest Loss - Other	Protected Areas	Intact Forest Landscapes	Species at Risk	Carbon	Boreal Caribou	Mountain Caribou	TOTAL
Dryden Forest	1	3	4	0	2	1.5	0	0	11.5
Kenora Forest	4	1	3	2	2	1.75	4	0	17.75
Lac Seul Forest	2	2	3	2	2	1.5	3	0	15.5
Red Lake Forest	4	2	3	1	2	1.5	4	0	17.5
Trout Lake Forest	4	3	3	1	2	1.5	3	0	17.5
Whiskey Jack Forest	2	1	3	2	3	1.5	4	0	16.5

Table 1. Risk scores for each of the tenures supplying wood to the Interfor sawmill in Ear Falls, Ontario, Canada.

The results can also be presented on individual maps for each value to provide a quick visual comparison. The boreal caribou map for this sawmill, for example, shows risk scores ranging from zero to four across the tenures (Figure 2).

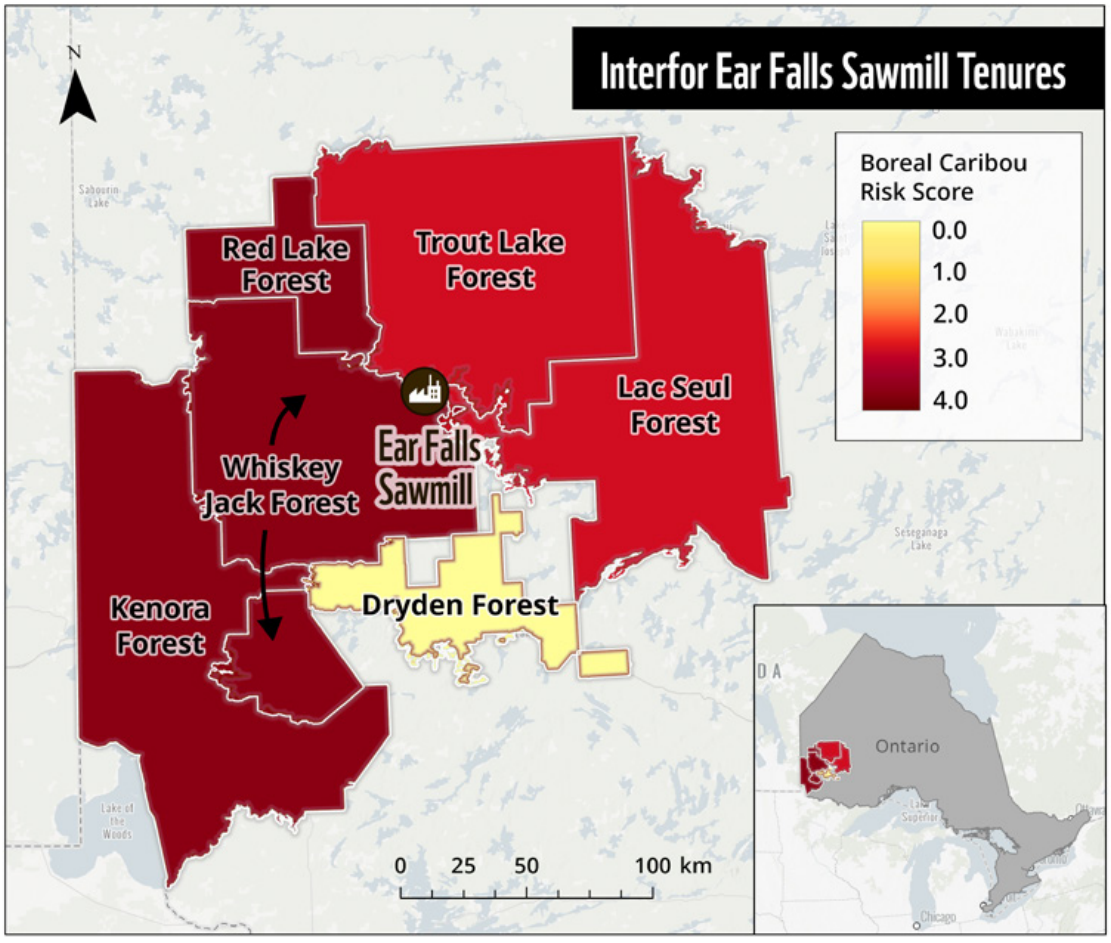


Figure 2. Boreal caribou scores for each of the six tenures supplying wood to the Interfor sawmill in Ear Falls, Ontario, Canada. A high risk score indicates that boreal caribou range areas overlapping with the forest tenure are highly disturbed.

The results from this risk analysis provide a starting point for further investigation into how companies can evaluate certain values in forest management. The tool can help identify areas needing additional information and questions to ask forest managers. Some sample questions for the forest managers of these tenures could include:

- What mitigation measures are currently in place to address values with high-risk scores in each tenure? Are there new mitigation measures that could be adopted to further reduce risk?
- The Kenora, Red Lake and Whiskey Jack forest tenures all have the highest score for boreal caribou. Which caribou ranges overlap with these tenures? Do the forest management plans for these tenures align with the federal recovery strategy for boreal caribou?
- Large portions of many tenures have been lost to fire. How are the forest managers addressing increased forest fire risk in their management plans?
- The scores for protected areas are high for all tenures. Perhaps the forest managers could work with the government and other stakeholders to identify areas of conservation interest that could be considered for protection.
- Are there other important conservation values that may be at risk within these tenures, but are not covered by this tool?

Learn More

You may access the full technical report here.

Contact

For more information about applying the Forest Tenure Risk Analysis, please reach out to Devon Earl, Associate Specialist Forest Conservation dearl@wwfcanada.org

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