

Forest Certification

British Columbia, Canada

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British Columbia has strongly supported certification as a way to meet growing customer interest and to demonstrate the province's commitment to sustainable forest management. Certification complements B.C.'s other environmental achievements, including strict forest practices regulations, stakeholder-based land use planning, and the doubling of the parks system.

A certification leader

British Columbia has emerged as the North American leader in forest certification. Virtually every major B.C. forest company has now met the requirements of ISO's environmental management system, and has either

achieved or is pursuing third-party certification. Certification is also a priority for many small forestry operators, mills and manufacturers.

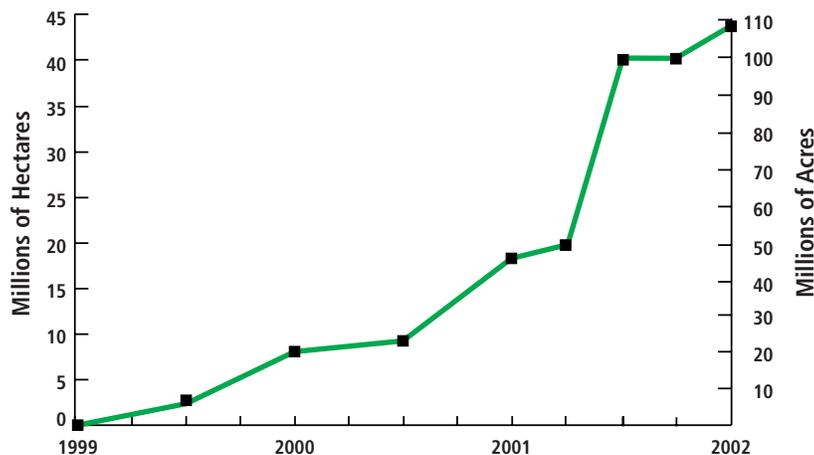
While B.C. is leading the way with almost half of Canada's certified land, the rest of the country is also making rapid progress. Canada has 227 million acres (92 million hectares) of lands managed under ISO requirements or third-party certification -- more than any other country in the world. (The U.S. has approximately 77 million acres, or 31 million hectares.)

Certification systems

B.C. supports a variety of forest certification systems. Four are now in place, each with its own approach to responsible forest management.

ISO – The International Standard Organization certifies a company's environmental management system, and includes requirements covering all environmental aspects of forest operations. Most major companies have now achieved ISO requirements, which serve as a good base to pursue third-party certification systems.

CSA, SFI and FSC certifications (described below) now total 24.5 million acres (9.9 million hectares) -- larger than the state of Oregon, or almost one-quarter of B.C.'s total certified area. Canada-wide surveys predict the area certified under these systems will almost quadruple over the next three to four years.



About 108 million acres (44 million hectares) of B.C. is managed by companies that have either met ISO requirements or achieved third-party certification. More than 60% of the annual harvest comes from operations which meet certification or ISO requirements.



In B.C., certification is seen as one component of the province's overall commitment to responsible forest management.

CSA -- The Canadian Standards Association certifies both for the management system and for specific forest management performance measures developed through public consultation. CSA recently developed a chain-of-custody system. Third-party evaluations, such as the Council of European Paper Industries, ranked the CSA as among the best in the world. The American Forest and Paper Association (AF&PA) recognizes CSA as the functional equivalent of the SFI program. B.C.'s CSA certifications total 11.6 million acres (4.7 million hectares).

SFI -- The Sustainable Forestry Initiative, developed by the AF&PA, requires that companies meet 12 standard principles and 30 performance measures for forest management. Since much of B.C.'s

lumber is exported to the U.S., many producers are choosing SFI certification. SFI certification is now at 12.6 million acres (5.1 million hectares), about the same as CSA.

FSC -- The Forest Stewardship Council has principles and criteria to assess plans and on-the-ground performance, and may include a

certified products label. Due to the lack of regional standards, few companies have chosen to pursue FSC certification in B.C. FSC standards for B.C. are expected in 2003. Meanwhile, 237,000 acres (96,000 hectares) has been certified by individual FSC certifiers operating with their own checklists.

Support for certification

As the owner of 95 per cent of B.C.'s forest land, the provincial government has had an important role in supporting certification efforts by large companies, small businesses, and communities involved with forestry. Pilot projects are testing how certification systems can be practically applied on public lands in different areas of the province. Government has participated in standards development to encourage the implementation of standards that are appropriate and applicable to the province. Forest policy changes being considered by the government may help support certification efforts, for example, by clarifying forest management responsibility and accountability. Government, companies and stakeholders continue to work cooperatively on certification issues.

For more information see
<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/het/certification>

