

### Monitoring Forest Operations

Since 1930, the Alberta government has monitored forest industry activities by conducting timber inspections of harvested areas. This work began in the forest reserves in southwestern Alberta when the province took over the ownership and management of natural resources from the federal government, under the mandate of the newly-created Alberta Forest Service.

In 1966, a forest tenure system that allocated the right to harvest Crown timber to companies and individuals was introduced. Designated Forest Officers appointed by the Minister carried out timber inspections of harvested areas to ensure standards and legislation were followed.

Forestry activities must be completed according to the approved plans and provincial legislation. In May 2008, the department launched the Forest Operations Monitoring Program (FOMP) to standardize how department inspections of active timber harvesting (Figure 1) and reforestation activities are conducted. The program also includes an internal audit process to ensure consistency of inspections and reporting. Non-compliant activities identified during an inspection may be subject to enforcement actions, such as financial penalties. FOMP is an important tool to help ensure the sustainability of our forests.

In May 2009, FOMP was awarded the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001 certification. Alberta is the only province to have such a monitoring program registered under ISO 9001 standards. With this certification, FOMP is subjected to independent external audits. In May 2011, FOMP successfully passed a surveillance audit.

The department's focus through FOMP is to continually strengthen the working relationship between the department and industry to achieve sustainable forest management.

FOMP has two main components:

- Forest Operations Monitoring (FOM), and
- Silviculture-ARIS Monitoring (SAM).

Figure 1. A timber harvesting operation.



FOM involves field inspections of active timber harvesting and reforestation activities to ensure they meet required provincial standards (Figure 2).

The number of FOM inspections completed is based on risk of non-compliance and is determined from key factors including volume harvested, previous enforcement actions, trends of unacceptable practices recorded and professional validation of mandatory plans. High priority environmental values and sensitivities are considered in the final selection of harvested areas to be inspected.

SAM involves comparing samples of records from the Alberta Regeneration Information System

Figure 2. FOMP auditor inspecting a harvested area.



(ARIS) database with the forest company's approved reforestation plan and the department's field observations.

SAM inspections are carried out on reforestation activities, such as planting (Figure 3) and site preparation, completed between May 1 to April 30. The department determines the number of inspections based on the records in ARIS, including key factors such as the amount of reforestation activities, survey results and the risks of non-compliance associated with the type of reforestation activity.

All FOMP inspections are recorded in Alberta's Geographic Land Information Management and Planning System (GLIMPS) database. All non-compliant activities resulting in enforcement actions are recorded in the provincial Incident Reporting System (IRS) database.

Figure 3. An example of a reforested area inspected by the department.



Details of certificate at "<http://srd.alberta.ca>"

## Current Statistics

From May 1, 2010 to April 30, 2011, the department conducted 3,103 FOMP inspections on Alberta public land (Table 1).

As shown in Table 1, and Figures 4 and 5, the Upper Athabasca Region had the highest number of FOMP inspections (29.68%) as well as the highest timber volume harvested (37.93%).

Although the timber volume harvested is an important factor to determine the number of FOMP inspections, other key factors are also used.

The Red Deer Region had no inspections and had the lowest timber volume harvested, as it is mainly comprised of non-forested private land.

Table 1. Forest Operations Monitoring Program inspections and the total timber volume harvested by Land-use Framework Planning Region, 2010/11.

Land-use Framework Planning Region	No. of FOM inspections <sup>1</sup>	No. of SAM inspections <sup>2</sup>	Total number of FOMP inspections	Total timber volume harvested in Alberta <sup>3</sup> (m <sup>3</sup> )
Lower Athabasca	254	94	348	2,077,295
Lower Peace	412	296	708	3,823,554
North Saskatchewan	259	235	494	1,589,444
Red Deer	0	0	0	9,313
South Saskatchewan	85	56	141	308,932
Upper Athabasca	390	531	921	7,971,185
Upper Peace	182	309	491	5,234,449
<b>Provincial Total</b>	<b>1,582</b>	<b>1,521</b>	<b>3,103</b>	<b>21,014,172<sup>P</sup></b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes return inspections, follow-up inspections, active reforestation and current year's target inspections.

<sup>2</sup>Includes return inspections. <sup>3</sup>There was no timber exported for processing by mills outside Alberta. The volume harvested is from May 1, 2010 to April 30, 2011, and includes all allocated timber harvested, as well as timber from industrial salvage, and private and federal lands (1,811,952 m<sup>3</sup>). Timber volume removed because of industrial use of land within an allocated forest area is excluded. A total of 16,558 m<sup>3</sup> was Local Timber Permits. <sup>P</sup>Preliminary results.

Current Statistics cont'd

Figure 4. Percentage of FOMP inspections on Alberta public land by Land-use Framework Planning Region, 2010/11.<sup>1</sup>

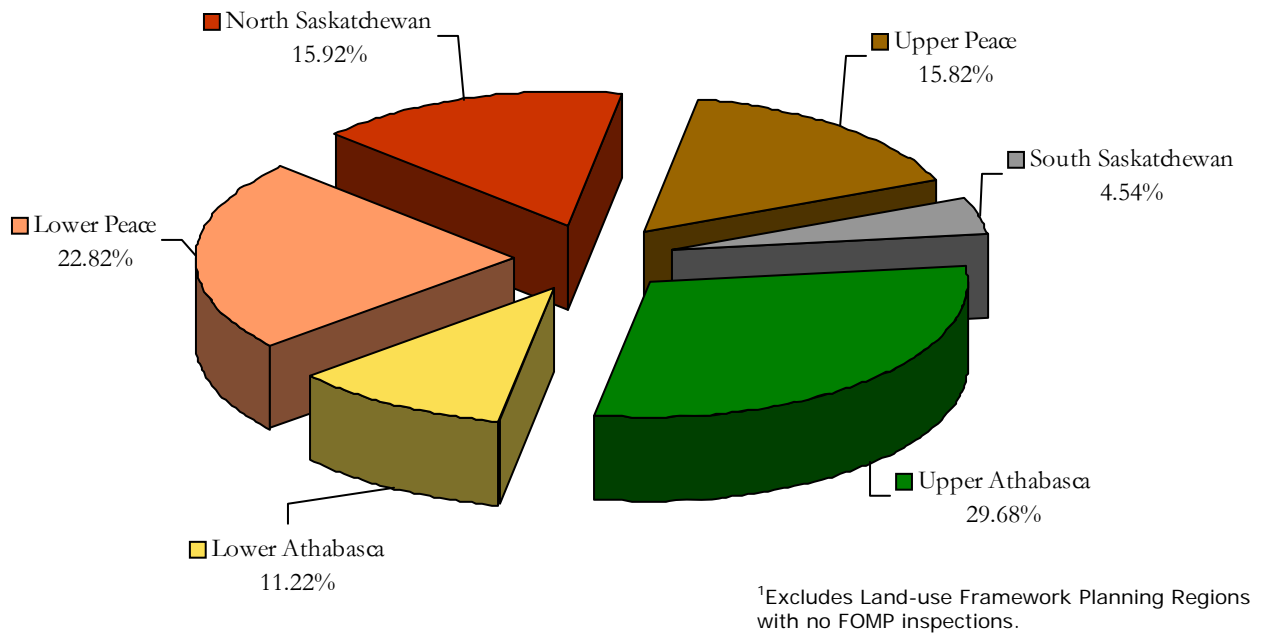


Figure 5. Percentage of total timber volume harvested in Alberta by Land-use Framework Planning Region, 2010/11.

