

Sustainable Forest Management

2014 Facts & Statistics

Spring 2016 ISBN 978-1-4601-2791-9 ISSN 2368-4925
Agriculture and Forestry

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) 9001:2008 certification and was re-certified in April of 2012. Alberta is the only province to have such a monitoring program registered under the ISO 9001:2008 standard. With this certification, FOMP is subject to annual independent external audits.

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).

FOM involves field inspections of active timber

Figure 1. A timber harvesting operation



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 (ARIS) database with the forest company's

Figure 2. FOMP auditor inspecting a harvested area



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



Refer to "<http://srd.alberta.ca/LandsForests/ForestManagement/Default.aspx>"

Statistics

From May 1, 2013 to April 30, 2014, the department conducted 2,414 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 (33.31%) as well as the highest timber volume harvested (35.06%).

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, 2013/14

Land-use Framework Planning Region	No. of FOM inspections ¹	No. of SAM inspections ²	Total number of FOMP inspections	Total timber volume harvested in Alberta ³ (m ³)
Lower Athabasca	187	86	273	2,344,022
Lower Peace	427	150	577	5,247,179
North Saskatchewan	208	142	350	1,429,493
Red Deer	0	0	0	7,383
South Saskatchewan	105	36	141	400,689
Upper Athabasca	483	321	804	8,155,677
Upper Peace	186	83	269	5,677,171
Provincial Total	1,596	818	2,414	23,261,614

1 Includes return inspections, follow-up inspections, active reforestation and current year's target inspections. 2 Includes return inspections. 3 Depending on the area, this may include balsam (black) poplar, trembling aspen and/or white birch. There was no timber exported for processing by mills outside Alberta.

Statistics cont'd

Figure 4. Percentage of all FOMP inspections on Alberta public land by Land-use Framework Planning Region, 2013/14¹

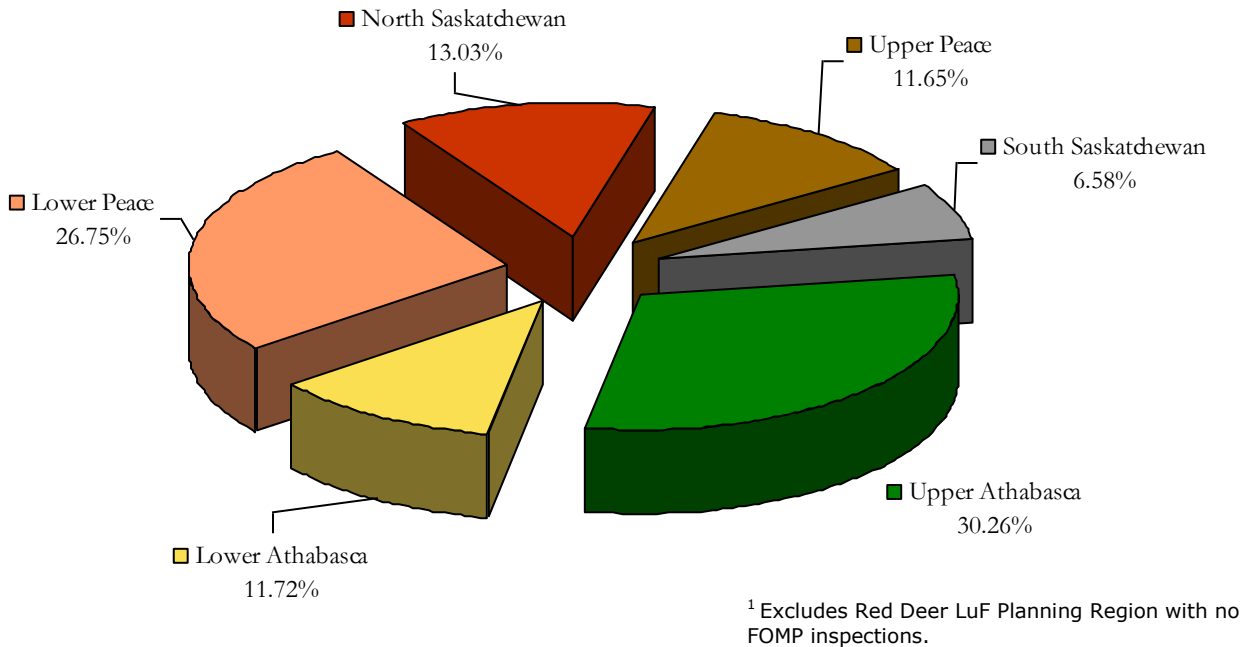
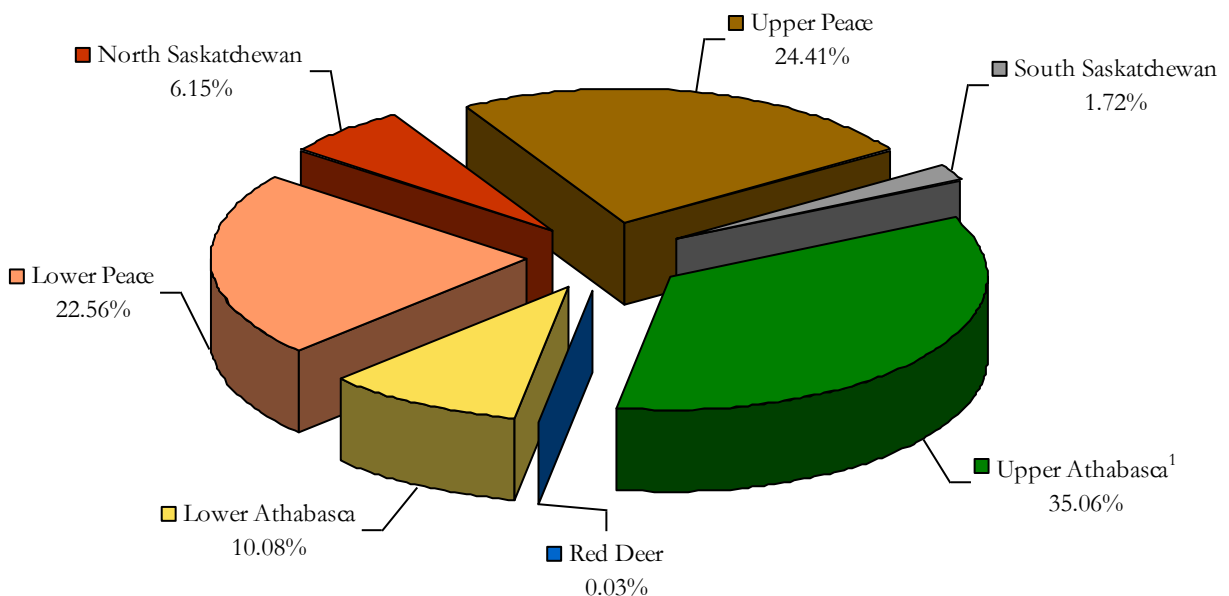


Figure 5. Percentage of total timber volume harvested in Alberta by Land-use Framework Planning Region, 2013/14



¹ Rounded to add up to 100%.