



Québec



green

Choose Québec's
forest products

Québec 

Note to readers

The information presented in this document is the most recent available as of July 2024. It is given for information purposes and has no legal value.

Credit

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- Jean-Marc Beaubien (p. 2);
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Sustainably managed forests in Québec

In Québec, forests occupy more than half of the entire territory, with an area of just over 906,000 km².

Approximately 92% of Québec's forests are public.

- Québec's forests are delimited by a northern line called the northern limit for timber allocations. Beyond this limit, no timber harvesting permits are issued. South of this boundary, all the conditions are in place to ensure that management practices rigorously meet all [criteria for sustainable forest management \(link in French only\)](#). This limit is based on criteria relating to biodiversity, wood productivity, natural dynamics and forest management potential. It also considers the social, ecological and economic issues of sustainable forest management.

- The Gouvernement du Québec has established a strict legislative and regulatory framework for the management of public forests, based namely on the Sustainable Forest Development Act.
- Québec's legislative framework for sustainable forest management contributes to the achievement of six criteria for sustainable management¹.
- Through its sustainable forest management practices and rigorous monitoring, Québec ensures that the areas harvested from public forests are regenerated.
- Over 90% of publicly managed forests are certified to internationally recognized standards. Forest certification is an additional recognition of the quality of sustainable management, already underpinned by a rigorous legal and regulatory framework.
- In 2005, Québec established the position of independent chief forester whose main mandate is to determine the maximum volume of annual timber harvests while ensuring the long-term sustainability of Québec's public forests.

- Every five years, the Gouvernement du Québec is accountable to its citizens and tables a report on sustainable forest management in the Legislative Assembly.

1) Conserving biological diversity;

2) Maintaining and improving the productivity of forest ecosystems;

3) Preserving soil and water;

4) Maintaining the contribution of forest ecosystems to major ecological cycles;

5) Maintaining the multiple socio-economic benefits that forests provide to society;

6) Taking into account the values and needs expressed by the people concerned when making development choices.

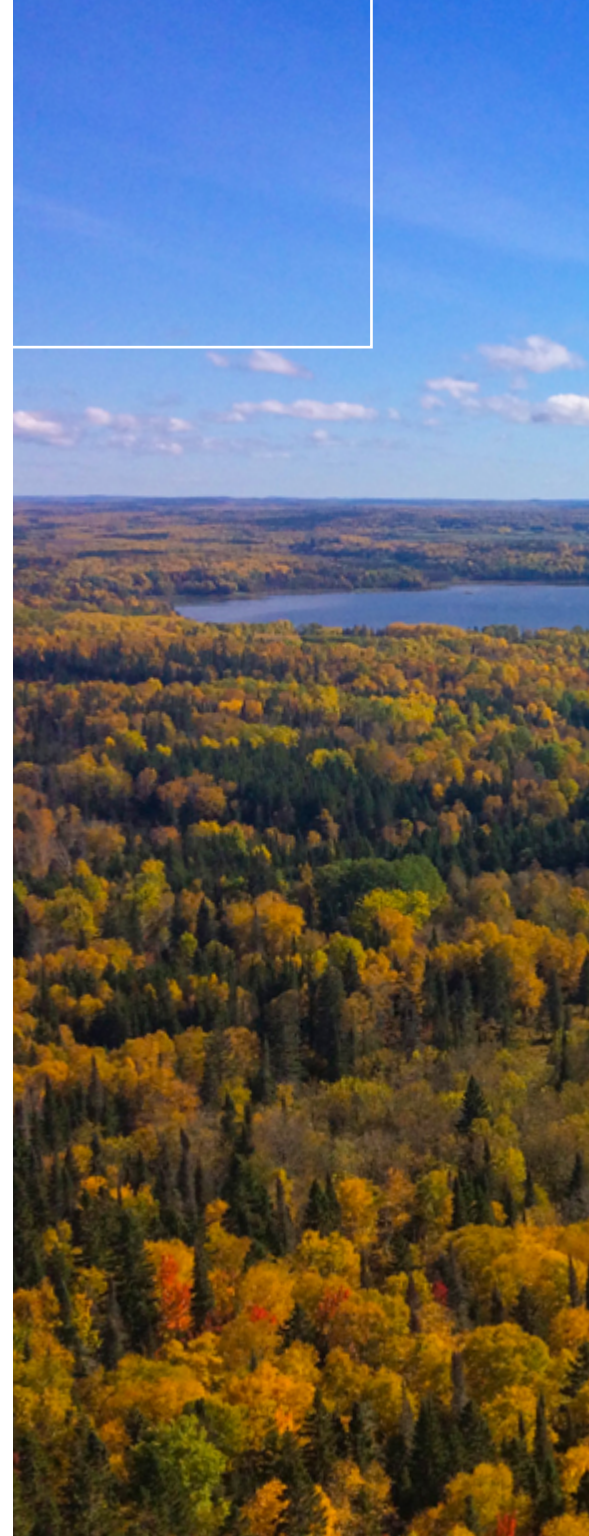


Deforestation-free forests

PUBLIC FORESTS

- Public forests, which represent 92% of Québec's forests, are not overexploited nor subject to deforestation, and regenerate well.
- Québec accounts for 2% of the world's forests and is a leader in sustainable forest management. Approximately 0.2% of Québec's 906,000 km² of forest land is harvested on public lands annually.
- Sustainable forest management in Québec requires that forests harvested on public lands regenerate naturally or be reforested when regeneration is deemed insufficient.
- Between 2018 and 2023, more than 116 million trees were planted on average each year in Québec's public forests. These trees are native species adapted to the area where they are reforested.
- The last two five-year reports on the state of Québec's public forests conclude that Québec's forest area is thriving.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), in its publication *The State of the World's Forests (2022)*, states that "Canada reported very low or no deforestation between 1990 and 2020."²
- In Québec, there is no permanent change to the use of public forests for agricultural purposes.

² <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/f81551bf-0a78-498b-a0a6-17f21467389d/content>



PRIVATE FORESTS

- Private forests, which account for 8% of Québec's forests, are also doing well. Between 2013 and 2023, the area of private forests in Québec rose from 70,000 to nearly 73,000 km², an increase of 4.3%.
- Private forests are owned by tens of thousands of private landowners. They are managed within a robust regulatory framework at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. The main laws governing work in private forests are as follows:



- Civil Code of Québec
- Sustainable Forest Development Act
- Act respecting land use planning and development
- Fisheries Act
- Act respecting the preservation of agricultural land and agricultural activities
- Act respecting the conservation and development of wildlife
- Act respecting the marketing of agricultural, food and fish products
- Environment Quality Act
- Act respecting threatened or vulnerable species
- Species at Risk Act
- Forest Engineers Act.

- Municipalities must maintain a forested area within their boundaries. Under the Act respecting land use planning and development, provisions ensure the protection of forest cover and promote the sustainable management of private forests.
- In addition to the regulatory framework established by governments, many organizations and professionals provide guidance to private forest owners on sustainable forest management.
- In Québec, the risk of deforestation, which would involve converting private forests to agricultural use, is negligible. In fact, there has been an increase in forested area.

A land without forest degradation



In Québec, managed forests are mainly regenerated naturally.

- There is no internationally recognized definition of forest degradation and no consensus on how to measure this concept among major international bodies.

- Despite the lack of consensus, it is scientifically recognized that measuring the resilience of a forest can detect the presence or absence of a degradation process.
- When natural regeneration is deemed insufficient, Québec can resort to reforestation using native species.
- Over the past ten years, nearly 40% of annual areas sustainably managed in public forests in Québec³ have been reforested, leaving public forests predominantly to natural regeneration.
- Sustainable forest management in Québec does not cause forest degradation. It maintains the resilience of the natural forest (the ability of a system to reorganize and recover

from disturbance). The Gouvernement du Québec has acquired the scientific knowledge to measure forest disturbance and resilience, confirming that sustainable forest management does not cause forest degradation.

³ That is, they have been subject to wood harvesting.

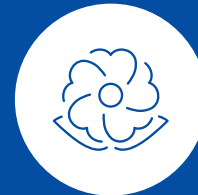


A strong legislation framework for sustainable forest management

In Canada, forestry is governed by a robust regulatory framework. A series of federal laws provide a framework across the country, while most planning, harvesting, silviculture, water, species at risk, and conservation issues are managed by provincial governments.

- In Canada, forest operations are governed by general federal legislation, including⁴:
 - Forestry Act
 - Species at Risk Act
 - Migratory Birds Convention Act
 - Fisheries Act
 - The Impact Assessment Act
 - Canadian Environmental Protection Act
 - Pest Control Products Act
 - Seeds Act & Seeds Regulations

- In Québec, the main regulations and laws that influence environmental aspects related to forestry are:
 - Sustainable Forest Development Act (SFDA)
 - Regulation respecting the sustainable development of forests in the domain of the State (RADF)
 - Environment Quality Act
 - Regulation respecting threatened or vulnerable plant species and their habitats
 - Act respecting threatened or vulnerable species
 - Regulation respecting threatened or vulnerable wildlife species and their habitats
 - Act respecting the conservation and development of wildlife
 - Regulation respecting wildlife habitats
- The Sustainable Forest Management Strategy which stems from the SFDA, is an important element in the implementation of Québec's forest regime. It ensures Québec's progress in sustainable forest management. It is the basis of the major guidelines and policies for public forests in Québec.



⁴ https://www.ncasi.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NCASI18_CanForestReg_2021rev1_web.pdf

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- In addition, Canada’s international trade in forest products is governed by three major pieces of legislation, including sanctions against illegal logging:
 - Canada is a signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and this agreement is implemented by the Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act;
 - The Plant Protection Act;
 - The Customs Act.
 - With respect to international agreements to protect and improve the environment, the governments of Québec and Canada adhere to the principles and objectives of the Paris Agreement.
 - Through its Plan Nature 2030, Québec also aims to meet the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework’s targets, including conserving 30% of the land by 2030.



Respecting local populations and Indigenous communities, a priority for Québec

- Indigenous and treaty rights are protected by the Constitution of Canada.
- On November 12, 2010, Canada formally endorsed the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in full respect of the Constitution and its laws.
- On November 15, 2010, the Gouvernement du Québec welcomed this gesture, stating that the Declaration will help promote and protect the rights of Indigenous peoples while respecting the law applicable in its territory.
- On October 8, 2019, the Québec National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion recognising the main principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- On June 21, 2021, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act received royal assent and came into force. The purpose of the Act is to affirm the Declaration as an international human rights instrument, while providing a framework for advancing its implementation at the federal level.
- The Gouvernement du Québec ensures that its practices are adapted to the realities and needs of local, regional and Indigenous communities.
- Québec's forestry regime provides measures to involve local and Indigenous communities at various stages of sustainable forest management (notably through the Forest Management and Development Consultation Policy, which makes it possible to consult and accommodate Québec's Indigenous communities in a distinct manner).



A transparent supply chain

A government open to the dissemination of information.



- In its desire to provide simple, free and transparent access to up-to-date data on Québec's forests, the Gouvernement du Québec has launched the interactive map Forêt ouverte (<https://www.foretouverte.gouv.qc.ca/>) as well as several mapping or information services such as [La Forêt démystifiée](#) (links in French only).
- According to Transparency International, Canada ranks 12th out of 180 countries in corruption-free governance⁵.
- Every year, the Government of Canada publishes [The State of Canada's Forests](#).

⁵ <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/canada>







To join us

For questions about sustainable forest management in Québec, contact our experts.

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