



New report reveals that shorelines in Canada's forested watersheds are impacted by logging practises

EDMONTON, January 19, 2004 – Shoreline -- or riparian -- areas are increasingly affected by expanding logging activities and much more could be done to protect and conserve these important portions of Canada's forested watersheds. That is the conclusion of a new report from Global Forest Watch Canada, which is currently the most comprehensive review of scientific literature on the topic available.

“Riparian areas, those places where water meets land, are rich components of our forests. They provide critical ecological functions in Canada's forest ecosystems and help protect watersheds for Canadians,” says Peter Lee, ecologist and national coordinator of Global Forest Watch Canada (GFWC), “Logging has rapidly increased throughout Canada and sustainable logging practices need to be adopted that give serious consideration to the values of shoreline areas.”

The report, *Where land and waters meet: Understanding and Protecting Riparian Areas in Canada's Forests*, focuses on North American scientific literature regarding forested shoreline areas, their ecological roles and functions, the impacts of logging and how to mitigate these impacts.

Peter Lee notes, “Riparian areas provide habitat for wildlife and they moderate sediment and nutrient input into lakes and streams. Both governments and logging companies could improve management in our shoreline forests that would have major implications for the conservation of our critical aquatic ecosystems.”

Although shoreline areas have always been affected by natural disturbances, from the changes wrought by fire or wind to the impact of beavers felling trees, they are increasingly being affected by industrial activities, particularly by logging. Industrial impacts can range from the very direct (e.g., building a road or bridge, or logging directly within riparian zones), to the indirect (e.g., cutting in upland forests can alter light, temperature and exposure).

The report identifies measures that forest companies can take to protect shoreline areas, including establishing streamside and lakeside buffers where no logging occurs, reducing road construction, and reducing overall logging in the watersheds. The report also identifies research and reviews that still need to be conducted in order to increase our understanding of these areas, and the impact that various activities have on them. It concludes that public awareness needs to be raised about activities in these sensitive areas, that audits of management practices need to be conducted, and that the forestry industry needs to adopt sustainable practices that give serious consideration to the values of shoreline areas.

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Where land and waters meet: Understanding and Protecting Riparian Areas in Canada's Forests, including maps and satellite pictures, as well as media briefing materials, is available for download at: www.globalforestwatch.ca

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