

Intact Forest Landscapes Individual Environmental Assessment Request for: Friends of Temagami and Earthroots

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Intact Forest Landscapes – New Forest Stewardship Council Protection

How does an Individual Environmental Assessment address these concerns in a way that the Class Environmental Assessment does not?

The failure to incorporate planning for the protection of Intact Forest Landscapes (IFL) within the 2019-2019 Temagami Management Unit (TMU) Forest Management Plan (FMP) will allow forestry operators to reduce the size of two of Ontario's largest IFLs below the minimum threshold recognized to protect biodiversity by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). IFLs support a globally significant level of biodiversity and carbon sequestration that must be recognized and included in all forest management activities.

The TMU is the only MU in Ontario that has not yet achieved FSC certification.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) have repeatedly denied the existence and importance of IFLs within the TMU through all stages of the 2019-2029 FMP processes, including during Issue Resolution with both district and regional managers. An individual Environmental Assessment is required to identify IFL environments within the TMU and limit the disruption of a globally significant environmental value, as well as bring the TMU in line with the rest of the province in regards to FSC standards.

The Importance of Intact Forest Landscapes:

Potapov et al. (2017) define an intact forest landscape (IFL) as a seamless mosaic of forest and naturally treeless ecosystems with no remotely detected signs of human activity and a minimum area of 500 km². They also describe the critical values of IFLs including stabilizing terrestrial carbon storage, harboring biodiversity, regulating hydrological regimes, and providing other ecosystem functions. An increasing rate of global IFL loss (area reduction) due to logging, agricultural expansion, fire and mining/resource extraction activities was documented.

This study (Potapov et al. 2017) also documented that northern temperate-southern boreal forests in North America have declined by 15.5% over the 13-year period. In the absolute terms, Russia, Brazil, and Canada share the largest area of IFL loss. Protected areas were found to have a positive effect in slowing the reduction of IFL area from timber harvesting but were less effective in limiting agricultural expansion. Given that only 12% of the global IFL area is protected and the need for investment in carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation, additional protection should target the most valuable remaining IFLs.

In a recent paper published in *Nature Ecology and Evolution*, Watson et al. (2018) further emphasize the importance of IFLs and make management recommendations as follows.

“There is emerging evidence that the remaining intact forest supports an exceptional confluence of globally significant environmental values relative to degraded forests, including imperiled biodiversity, carbon sequestration and storage, water provision, indigenous culture and the maintenance of human health.”

“Here we argue that maintaining and, where possible, restoring the integrity of dwindling intact forests is an urgent priority for current global efforts to halt the ongoing biodiversity crisis, slow rapid climate change and achieve sustainability goals.”

“Retaining the integrity of intact forest ecosystems should be a central component of proactive global and national environmental strategies, alongside current efforts aimed at halting deforestation and promoting reforestation.”

Temagami’s Intact Forest Landscapes:

Two of Ontario’s largest IFLs (the largest when combined) are at least partially located within the TMU (Figure 2). The importance of protecting IFLs from logging was recently recognized by Forest Stewardship Council Canada with the *Interim Guidance for the Delineation of Intact Forest Landscapes* (FSC 2017a). Table 1 provides standards for the base size and contiguous patches, minimum width, bottlenecks, buffers, natural disturbances and protected areas.

On December 30, 2016, the FSC International Board of Directors published an advice note stating that “forest management operations within IFLs, including harvesting and road building, could proceed as long as they did not impact more than 20 per cent of IFLs within the FMU and did not reduce any IFLs below the 50,000 ha threshold in the landscape. This advice note ensured that 80 per cent of IFL core areas within FSC-certified forests have been placed under temporary protection as of 1 January 2017, until new national standards are in force” (FSC 2017b).

This FSC standard should be applied in the TMU.

**Figure 2 – Two Large Intact Forest Landscapes in the Temagami Region
(IFLs = green)**

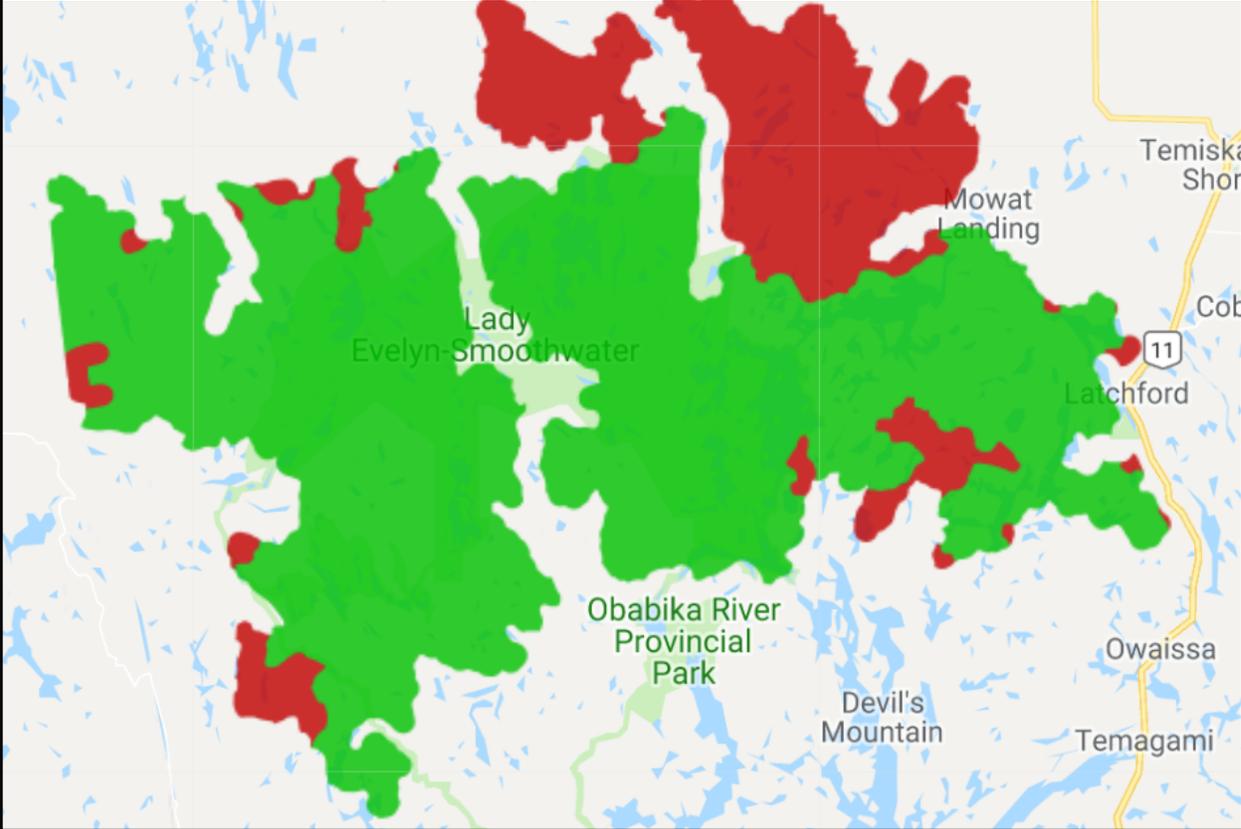


Table 1. Interim Guidance for Delineating IFLs.

Descriptor	Direction	Application Notes
Base Size and Contiguous Patches	The minimum size for IFLs is 50,000 ha.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All IFLs greater than 50,000 ha must be identified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ This includes IFLs wholly in the Management Unit (MU) and IFLs that cross MU boundaries. ◦ For IFLs partially within the MU, the entire extent of the IFL (i.e. including portions outside of the MU) must be identified.
Minimum Width	The minimum width of an IFL is 10 km as measured by one 10 km diameter circle that is entirely within its boundaries.	The circle needs to fit in only one location within the prospective IFL. This will eliminate IFLs that are all narrow corridors and have no main body.
Bottlenecks	Corridors or appendages to the IFL must be at least 2 km wide.	Bottlenecks are constrictions of an intact area to a width of less than 2 km. The IFL should not include any portions that are less than this width.
Buffers around anthropogenic features	<p>Notable anthropogenic features (including most roads) are to be buffered by 1 km</p> <p>Cut-blocks are to be buffered by 500 m.</p>	<p>Notable anthropogenic features include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • roads \geq 5 m wide • utility corridors • buildings • highways • railways • pipelines • settlements <p>Where there are roads \geq 5 m wide within cutblocks, the extent of the buffer into to forest should be the farthest extent of either the road buffer or the cut-block buffer</p> <p>Buffers should not be applied around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • snowmobile or ATV trails • hiking trails • canoe routes or portages • roads < 5 m wide
Non-forest terrestrial communities	<p>IFLs may contain up to 50% non-forest terrestrial and wetland areas as part of a broader ecosystem, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wetlands – bogs, fens, marshes; • grasslands, meadows, scrub; and • bare rock. 	Areas of non-forest vegetated communities are typically included in definitions of intact forest because they play a strong role in the function and character of the landscape. The amount of non-forest that may be included in IFLs is limited to 50% of the IFL area.

Open Water	Open water is to be included in the IFL up to 500 m off shore.	Expanses of open water should be included as part of an IFL providing that they do not extend more than 500 m off shore. These areas comprise both inclusions within a vegetated area and extensions beyond a vegetated area such as may occur at the shore of a large lake.
Natural Disturbances	Natural disturbance (fire, blow down, insect infestation) are not to be excluded from IFLs.	Areas that have experienced natural disturbance are to be included in IFLs provided that they are part of a land base that meets all the other requirements (i.e. buffers, minimum width, bottlenecks).
Protected Areas	Protected areas and FSC Candidate Protected Areas are not to be excluded from IFLs.	All considerations included in this document regarding the identification of IFLs should be applied to existing legally protected areas and candidate protected areas. Where these areas abut other portions of the MU, the total area to be considered for possible designation as IFLs includes the protected areas and candidate protected areas.

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