

Local Level Indicators Program



Local Level Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management for Foothills Research Institute

The Local Level Indicators Program was established in the late 1990s. The Canadian Council of Forest Ministers earlier had identified six prerequisites—"national criteria"—of sustainable forest management, which required local acceptance and adoption to be effective. In response, the Canadian Model Forest Program decided to develop and report local indicators of these criteria. Additionally, Foothills Research Institute agreed to identify local goals and to determine indicators that measured performance against the goals. In brief, Foothills Research Institute established the Local level Indicators (LLI) Program to assess the national criteria at a local level. The LLI Program now has gained enough scientific information with which to measure and report many local indicators.

The LLI Program reports local indicators from within the entire Foothills Research Institute land base. By measuring and monitoring these indicators over time plus updating reports, the LLI Program can reveal changes and trends as they occur. These changes and trends measure progress toward local and national sustainable forest management

Consequently, Foothill Research Institute is encouraging groups involved in forest use to adopt its indicators and methods of indicator-development when designing forest management plans. In doing so, organizations inside and outside Foothills Research Institute can measure and demonstrate progress toward their own sustainable use objectives and toward sustainable forest management in general. In this way, the LLI program can advance ecologically sound forest use practices and help forge sustainable forest management policy.

How is progress measured?

Progress towards sustainable forest management is measured against a series of yardsticks of varying detail and complexity. These yardsticks include Criteria, which broadly outline those conditions considered essential to sustainability. Goals summarize what is to be achieved under the Criteria, and Indicators identify the individual factors to be measured. Goals and indicators identified by Foothills Research Institute reflect local needs and conditions, but they are also consistent with Canada's national framework of sustainable forest management criteria.

Criteria and indicators are tools for characterizing the state of forests and for providing information on how forest lands and uses are changing. By comparing these changes against Goals, those with an interest in sustainable forest management can make informed decisions.

The Foothills Research Institute accepted the task of measuring these national criteria, and began by identifying local goals and indicators that would support the intent of Canada's broad commitment to sustainable development.

In 2003 Foothills Research Institute produced the Initial Status Report - Local Level Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management for the Foothills Model Forest. The Local Level Indicators on-line Follow-up State of the Forest Report is due to be released in 2008. This report will focus on a refined set of core indicators within a new and enhanced indicator format.



Foothills Research Institute is a leader in developing innovative science and knowledge for integrated resource management on the forest landscape through diverse and actively engaged partnerships.

The Foothills Research Partnership Ltd. landbase is located in west-central Alberta, and is based in the resource community of Hinton, some three hours west of Edmonton. It covers roughly 2.75 million hectare (27,500 square kilometres), and embodies Jasper National Park of Canada, the Willmore Wilderness Park, and the Forest Management Area of Hinton Wood Products, a Division of West Fraser Mills Ltd. It also includes some provincial "crown forest management units" and the Hinton Training Centre's Cache Percotte Training Forest. Within its boundaries are three forest areas—boreal, montane, and sub-alpine—and many forest uses including timber, petroleum, and coal extraction, tourism, and recreation.

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