

# **Boreal Conservation Project (BCP) Backgrounder**

## **Boreal Conservation Project (BCP) summary**

We all want a healthy environment, now and for future generations. But we also need the employment and other economic benefits generated by the development of our natural resources. Balancing economic and environmental goals is the fundamental premise of sustainable development. In order to continue to realize the full range of these goals over the long term, Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc (Al-Pac) and Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) have initiated a Boreal Conservation Project (BCP) that will apply common sense conservation and management concepts in a new partnership to develop a watershed-based conservation plan for 115,000 square kilometers of northeastern Alberta, including the Al-Pac Forest Management Agreement (FMA) area (see attached map).

Alberta-Pacific has committed \$1 million worth of cash and resources to the project over the next five years.

Scientists will initiate study programs on this area, building on past research, to investigate and evaluate existing biodiversity, ecosystem functions, and the land use practices of industry, Aboriginal peoples and communities. Learning more about how environmental systems work helps us find out the best ways to sustain them. Through the project, new decision-making tools and best practices will be developed and implemented to maintain a healthy, sustainable environment.

An important aspect of the BCP is its focus on watersheds and water quality and supply. The boreal forest is a source for water for much of northern Alberta, and it is in the interest of all residents of the region to ensure that water quality and quantity is maintained.

Aboriginal people have a strong bond with, and reliance upon, the boreal forest. Their knowledge of natural processes, biodiversity, plant properties and traditional land use is extremely valuable and will be an essential component of the BCP.

### **A Boreal Conservation Project will**

- Result in a conservation for 115,000 square kilometres of land in northeastern Alberta
- Improve basic information such as a watershed inventory
- Enhance science and its application to decision-making to develop new decision support systems for land managers
- Identify, develop and implement best practices
- Apply traditional land use knowledge

## Current Partners

Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. (Al-Pac) is an exceptional forest company with demonstrated environmental excellence in all its operations. It is located 250 kilometres northeast of Edmonton, and employs about 440 people full time, as well as about 650 contractors. Al-Pac uses the best available technology, including elemental chlorine free (ECF) bleaching, to manufacture high quality kraft pulp. Their sustainable harvesting takes place in its 58,000-square kilometre FMA area in northeastern Alberta. The company focuses on maintaining a healthy forest ecosystem, including all plants and animals. Rather than traditional clear-cutting methods, the company emulates the effects of forest fire, so harvest areas have irregular shapes and clumps of trees are left within them to support the natural habitat and regeneration processes. This “ecosystem management” approach is now being followed by many progressive forest companies throughout the world. Consultation with local communities and Aboriginal people helps Al-Pac understand the many reasons Albertans value the forest and is a vital part of the company’s success.

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) is a private not-for-profit organization. It has grown to become the most respected conservation organization in the country, positively influencing more than 7.6 million hectares (18.8 million acres) of habitat. DUC unveiled the Western Boreal Program in 1997 to design and deliver science-based conservation programs that will influence land use decisions by incorporating wetland conservation objectives and practices.

Al-Pac and DUC have created the core of a strategic and dynamic partnership that is already evolving to include governments, Aboriginal communities, other industrial land users, researchers and others who share their vision of an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable forest ecosystem.

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