

Forest Plan Reduces Protection of Water and Wildlife

The provincial government's new public forest management plan further chips away at protection measures for water and wildlife in New Brunswick, to avoid reducing the annual allowable cut of softwood.

"We have said repeatedly that New Brunswickers value the protection of water and wildlife over all else in our forests, but this is not reflected in the new forest plan," said David Coon, Executive Director for CCNB Action.

The new management plan will reduce the area of conservation forest from 30.5% to 28% of the overall forest. This will mean watercourse buffers will be narrowed to their absolute legal minimum of 30 metres, and 100,000 hectares of wildlife habitat (deer wintering areas) will be opened to clearcutting.

"Minister Northrup's forest plan is far better than the strategy the former government intended to implement this year, which would have severely reduced the area of available wildlife habitat, but there will be a reduction all the same," said David Coon, Executive Director for CCNB Action. "The status quo is barely acceptable to sustain our wildlife, so any reduction is a step backwards," said Coon.

The annual amount of softwood the industry is permitted to cut from the public forest will be locked-in for the next decade at the same level as it has been for the past 15 years, despite earlier indications by the Department of Natural Resources that it would have to be reduced. The annual cut for hardwoods is to be reduced by 21%.

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