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Leases Reveal Cumulative Effects Management Absent in Alberta Tar Sands, Forests

Industrial forestry and energy leasing are far outpacing environmental protection and promised stewardship of land and water across Alberta's public lands. New findings by Global Forest Watch Canada (GFWC) show cumulative effects management of Alberta's public lands and waters is lagging. Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) wants promises for conservation and environmental protection concerns dealt with responsibly by the departments within government that Albertans put their trust in.

"Intensive new leasing, logging and surface disturbance throughout Alberta's public forests and wetlands continues, including in federally protected caribou critical habitat," says Carolyn Campbell, AWA conservation specialist. "It is time to recognize the choice to carry on with business as usual has consequences for landscapes and wildlife that may never be undone."

"Promised land disturbance limits and biodiversity targets and thresholds are not in place. A Regional Groundwater Network is years away, and announced wetland policy exempts current and foreseeable oil sands developments in an apparent decision to facilitate ongoing wetland loss. Extensive new disturbance occurs while conservation is on hold and promises mean less than ever."

Alberta highlights of "Canada's Industrial Concessions: A Spatial Analysis" report:
61% of Alberta's total area has an industrial concession. 67% of Alberta's boreal area is covered by at least one concession, the highest boreal percentage of any jurisdiction in Canada. Only 17% of Alberta's boreal is now under interim or permanent protection from industry, whereas international scientists recommend 50%. Unpublished data provided to AWA by GFWC show that 67% of the Alberta portion of the First Nations Treaty 8 area has at least one industrial concession.

The highest amount of overlapping concessions in Canada is in Alberta, where 30% of the province has at least 2 industrial concessions, nearly double the Canadian average of 18%. Portions of northeastern Alberta have up to 4 different overlapping industrial concessions.

In Alberta, 70% of leased areas are already accessed or fragmented, defined as within 500 m of existing pipelines, seismic lines roads or other existing disturbance, by far the highest amount for a province or territory containing boreal forest. Alberta also has the greatest area under coal leases at 6,790 km².

In Alberta, the Lower Athabasca regional plan will increase protected areas in that region to 16% of the land base, mostly outside the oilsands region that is at greatest risk from cumulative industrial impacts. Of the proposed new Wildland Parks, 32% of their area has a pre-existing industrial concession.

For more information:

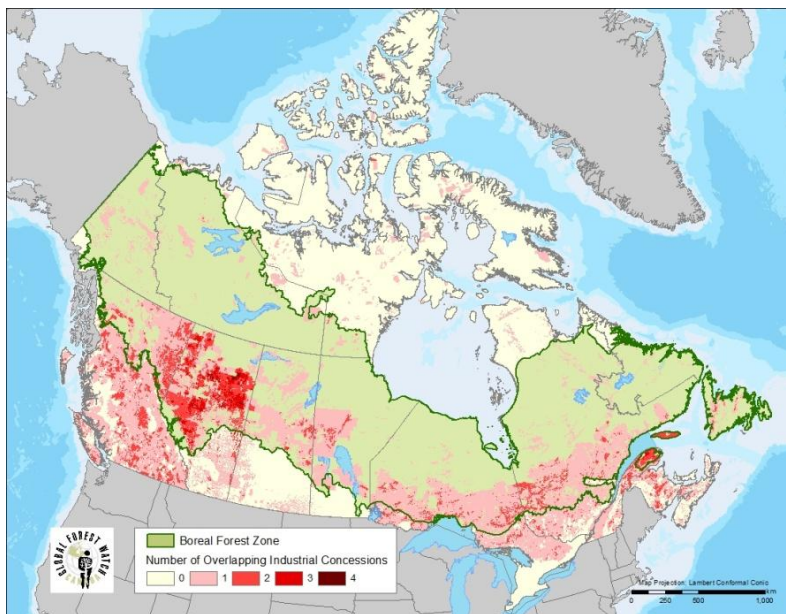
Carolyn Campbell, Alberta Wilderness Association, (403) 283-2025

Attached: Key Alberta points illustrated with maps from Global Forest Watch Canada's new report

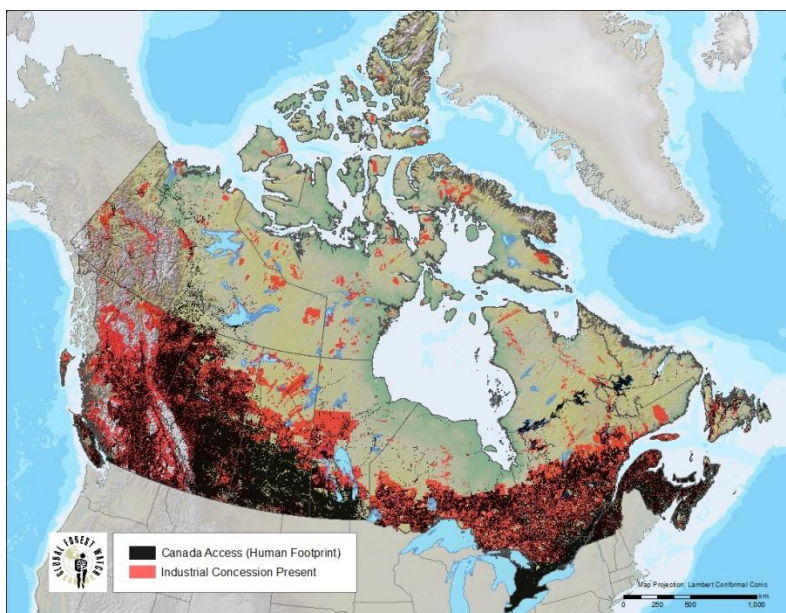




“Canada’s Industrial Concessions: A Spatial Analysis” full report is at: <http://www.globalforestwatch.ca/>

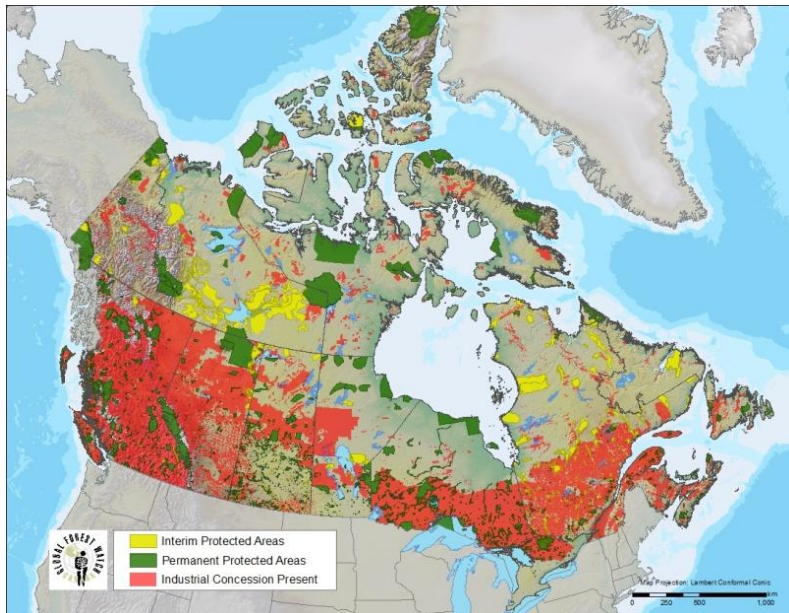


Overlapping Industrial Concessions - Map 6 in ‘Canada’s Industrial Concessions’ report
61% of Alberta’s area has an industrial concession. 30% of Alberta has at least 2 industrial concessions, the highest of any Canadian jurisdiction.

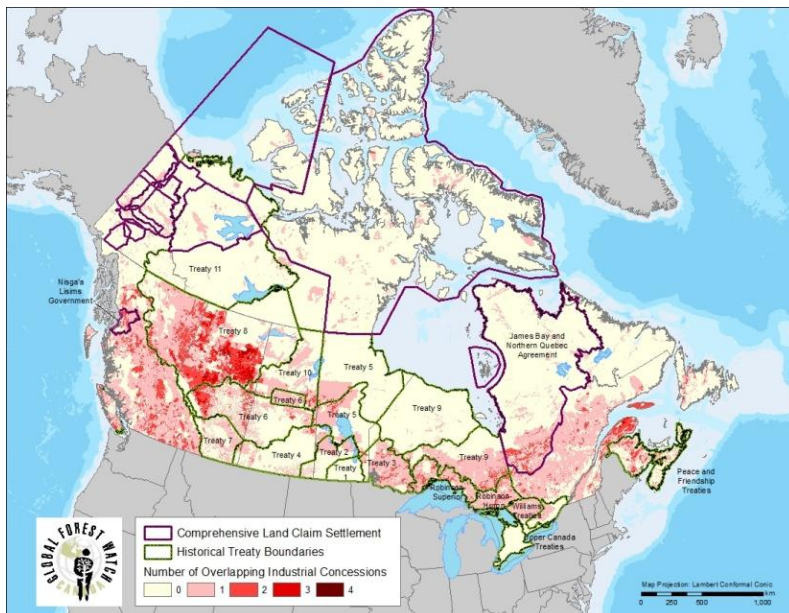


Industrial Concessions overlaid with Access - Map 7 in ‘Canada’s Industrial Concessions’ report
70% of Alberta’s concession (or leased) areas are already accessed or fragmented, by far the highest amount for a province or territory containing boreal forest.





Protected Areas and Industrial Concessions - Map 8 in 'Canada's Industrial Concessions' report
Only 17% of Alberta's boreal is now under interim or permanent protection from industry, whereas international scientists recommend 50%. 67% of Alberta's boreal area is covered by at least one concession, the highest boreal percentage of any jurisdiction in Canada.



Industrial Concessions overlaid with Canada Treaties - Map 9 in 'Canada's Industrial Concessions' report
Unpublished data provided to AWA by GFWC show that 67% of the Alberta portion of the First Nations Treaty 8 area has at least one industrial concession, including 49% by forestry, 36% by conventional petroleum and natural gas, 21% by tar sands, and 15% by mineral claims.

