

AWA Concerns with Forest Management Recently Increased

November 30, 2022



Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA)'s ongoing concerns with forest management in Alberta were recently increased when we gained access to a [2020 report](#) prepared by the Alberta Forest Products Association recommending ways for the government to increase industry's wood supply from Alberta's forests. This report illustrates many of the concerns that AWA has about how forests are managed in a timber-centric manner, with ecosystem values viewed as an obstacle to timber access, if they are considered at all. AWA sent a letter to Minister Todd Loewen regarding concerns with the recommendations in this report and has requested a meeting with him to discuss these concerns and other provincial forestry issues.

"Many of the recommendations in this report, if implemented, would further compromise ecosystem values in our forests," says Devon Earl, AWA conservation specialist. "In our view, ecosystem values have already been

The report, entitled “Investigating Innovative Ways to Improve and Enhance the Forest Resources in Alberta” (hereafter the report), suggests ways to increase companies’ timber supply by increasing the allowable forest land base, growing forests faster, and changing forest management policies and strategies. AWA is concerned that recommendations such as allowing logging inside protected areas and unallocated Forest Management Units, and allowing more forest harvest in the White Zone (settled areas), would irreparably harm ecosystem values in our forests.

“There is no discussion within the report about whether it is appropriate to increase timber supply,” says Earl. “Land-use planning including cumulative effects of all disturbance types on the landscape needs to be completed prior to any new forest harvest allocations.”

AWA is particularly concerned about the recommendation in the report to increase timber supply by logging in protected areas, especially given Premier Danielle Smith’s comments on October 21, 2022, that logging is a way to open up parks for recreation such as off-highway vehicle use. The recent ministerial mandate letter for the Department of Forestry, Parks, and Tourism also places strong emphasis on industry interests, with little mention of maintaining ecosystem values in forests and parks.

If you can, please write to Minister Todd Loewen (FPT.Minister@gov.ab.ca) and copy AWA (dearl@abwild.ca). Consider letting him know that:

- Logging is incompatible with the intent of parks as per the *Provincial Parks Act*. Parks are established primarily for the conservation of ecological and heritage values, with compatible low-impact recreation.
- Forest management needs to shift from a timber-centric approach to an ecosystem-based approach to sustain forest ecosystems and the services they provide, including timber supply.
- Regional and sub-regional land-use planning needs to be completed prior to allocating any new forests for timber harvest.

To read AWA’s letter to Minister Loewen, click [here](#).

For more information, contact Devon Earl, AWA conservation specialist

Dedicated to the conservation of wilderness and completion of a protected areas network, AWA inspires communities to care for Alberta's wild spaces through awareness and action.

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