

Under The Woodlands Improvement Act it is possible to have planting and improvement work carried out completely under government direction and mainly at public expense. Since its inception in 1966, the program provided assistance for 190,850 acres (77 230 ha) of privately owned land.

Ontario has enabling legislation to permit municipalities and conservation authorities to place abandoned and submarginal agricultural lands to which they have acquired title under agreement with the Ministry, which undertakes to plant and manage the properties for a specified period. Over 255,900 acres (103 560 ha) under such agreements are managed intensively and the older plantations are receiving regular thinnings. The trees removed are in demand for pulpwood, posts, poles and sawlogs, making the undertakings financially attractive. In addition, properties close to centres of population have acquired value as recreational areas. Forest pest problems in 1974 were dominated by the spruce budworm which infested almost 24 million acres (9.7 million ha), but spraying operations to control this insect were limited to 48,000 acres (19 400 ha) in three separate high-value local areas. Smaller acreages on Crown lands and lands managed under agreement totalling 10,000 acres (4 050 ha) were also treated for white pine weevil, pine and spruce sawflies, white grubs, white pine blister rust, annosus root rot, and mice.

The Forest Research Branch provides scientific and technical knowledge for the management of forest lands and is more specifically oriented toward attaining production targets. Various disciplines including tree ecology and physiology, site and fertilization, tree genetics and breeding, mensuration, silviculture, equipment design and development are used to solve problems in tree improvement, stock production, regeneration and forest tending. Research is carried out throughout Ontario and results are published in journals and reports. Headquarters is at Maple and there are four field stations at Thunder Bay, Sault Ste Marie, Dorset and Midhurst.

The Timber Sales Branch coordinates and supervises preparation of management plans for Crown management units and approves the plans prepared for company management units. Forest inventory requirements and priorities for such plans are determined by the branch. As at March 31, 1975, 179 plans (88 Crown units, 31 company units and 60 Agreement Forests) were completed or in process of completion for about 190,000 sq miles (492 000 km²). Forest access is most important in the implementation of management plans and the planning of access roads is part of the branch's responsibilities. The branch arranges for the allocation, disposition and measurement of Crown timber through Crown land licensing, timber sales and wood scaling. During 1974, some 480 Crown timber licences covering an area of 97,256 sq miles (251 900 km²) were effected. The harvest of timber from Crown land amounted to 512.8 million cu ft (14.5 million m³). Primary wood-using industries operating in the province are licensed and their performance is monitored. In 1974, there were 824 primary wood-using plants in Ontario. The branch is also responsible for the promotion of new industrial development and growth of the forest industry. Information is collected and analyzed on the production, transportation and utilization of timber.

The Forest Fire Control Branch is responsible for the area under organized forest protection in Ontario totalling 200,000 sq miles (518 000 km²) and including the main central band of accessible forests. This area is organized into eight regions and 38 districts. In 11 additional administrative districts, south of this area in the highly developed agricultural counties, municipalities are responsible for fire control. The vast inaccessible areas to the north of the fire districts, totalling over 114,000 sq miles (295 000 km²), do not support significant stands of merchantable timber and, except for the protection of private property and human life, are not normally protected. Within the fire regions, agreements were in effect in 1974 with 209 municipalities for the prevention and control of forest fires. An agreement was also in effect with the federal government for fire protection of 968,968 acres (392 127 ha) of Indian lands.