

Fact Sheet

Harvesting Sustainability

How much timber can be harvested sustainably in any given region?

Yukon's *Forest Resources Act* requires that timber harvesting is sustainable in the long term. Each forest region within Yukon has a maximum harvest level known as an Annual Allowable Cut.

Determining how much timber can be harvested involves a timber supply analysis (TSA) to examine how the forest changes over time due to disturbances such as fire, insects, harvesting and other factors.

What is a timber supply analysis?

Timber supply analysis determines how much timber is potentially available for harvesting. Many factors are considered during a TSA: forest resource management plans; harvesting activities; the size of the land base; forest inventory; and growth rates.

What key information do we need to conduct a timber supply analysis?

To analyse the forests within a region foresters conduct a vegetation inventory. The inventory gathers forest and vegetation information such as tree species, age, volume, height and condition. This involves using aerial photographs, maps and field verification.

Forest managers must also know how fast forests grow to predict how quickly different forests will regenerate after disturbances such as fires or harvesting.

10

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How is a timber supply analysis conducted?

A TSA committee prepares the technical information for a region. The TSA committee includes representatives from Yukon Government's Forest Management branch, the Department of Environment, First Nations, and Renewable Resource Council(s).

Tasks include:

- ▶ Ensuring that the analysis follows forest resource management plans and legal requirements;
- ▶ Preparing maps of the forest land base. This involves identifying and excluding areas that are not available or appropriate for harvesting such as: parks, private property, non-forested areas, swamps, streams and riparian reserves;
- ▶ Reviewing current forest management practices.
- ▶ Ensuring that the public is informed throughout the process of completing the timber supply analysis.

Once this information is gathered, it is entered into a timber supply model along with inventory and growth information to describe the current working forest within a region. Further analysis may be conducted to evaluate different potential forest management practices and/or harvest levels that impact the amount of timber available.

The results are then compiled in a draft TSA Discussion report. The report forms the basis for input from the public, First Nations and other stakeholders about proposed timber harvest levels. Once the TSA committee gathers input, it finalizes the report and presents it to the Director of the Forest Management branch. Then the process of deciding the annual allowable cut begins.

What is annual allowable cut?

The AAC is a decision on the maximum amount of timber that may be made available annually for harvesting within a region in response to social, economic and environmental considerations.

Who determines the annual allowable cut?

The Director of the Forest Management branch makes a determination on how much timber can be sustainably harvested on public lands. This decision is guided by the information collected from the TSA process, public and First Nations input, and the requirements of Yukon's *Forest Resources Act*.

Is there an opportunity for public input?

Yes, public input is important during the timber supply analysis and the annual allowable cut determination. There will be opportunities for the public to attend meetings, review report results and provide input during the TSA and AAC processes.