

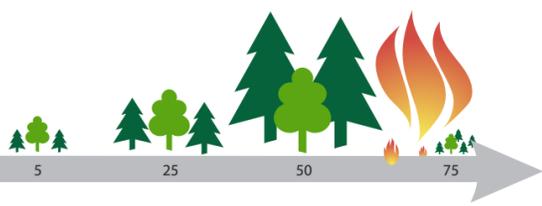
Natural Forest Pattern Harvesting

Natural Saskatchewan Forests

Disturbances, such as wildfires, are natural and essential processes in Saskatchewan's boreal forests.

Our forests have evolved to endure and thrive under frequent disturbances. Natural disturbances reset the forest clock, creating a mosaic of different aged forest areas. The forest and its inhabitants have adapted to wildfire and many species, like jack pine, rely on fire for renewal. Natural disturbances range in size and shape, and create a varied landscape that allows biodiversity to flourish.

It may seem counterintuitive, but disturbances actually keep the boreal forest healthy, diverse and resilient, reducing the risk of uncontrollable wildfires.



Natural Forest Pattern Harvesting

Natural forest pattern harvesting uses nature as a guide for managing the forest landscape.

Its goal is to move the current landscape towards one that looks more like a naturally disturbed landscape by designing harvest in a way that resembles the shapes, structures and sizes of wildfire.

Wildfire Patterns → Harvest Patterns



Harvest Event Planning

Harvest event planning is a new way of designing harvest areas. It strives to achieve a future forest similar to what fire would create.

A harvest event is a cluster of several harvest blocks that is considered as a single disturbance event, similar to how we think of a wildfire. Compared to traditional cut-and-leave harvesting, where small harvest areas are rotated like a crop, event harvesting concentrates the disturbance. This results in less forest fragmentation, requires fewer roads and creates large patches of future forest.

Harvest event planning doesn't allow companies to harvest more timber - it just changes the way the harvesting looks.

Traditional Forest Harvest



Small, spread out harvest blocks. More roads and more habitat fragmentation.

Natural Forest Pattern Harvest



Same area cut, but fewer roads and less habitat fragmentation. Closer to what fires naturally create.

Tree Retention

As in a wildfire, where unburned trees are left behind, timber harvesters must also leave a certain amount of live trees in each harvest event.

Within harvested areas, live, mature trees are left behind within and between harvest areas as single trees, clumps and islands. Retention buffers are also required along all permanent and intermittent waterbodies.

Tree retention provides refuge and habitat for wildlife, maintains natural seed sources and increases ecological diversity.



Old Forest

As forests age, they become more structurally diverse, providing habitat for an abundance of species.

Natural forest pattern harvesting ensures there is a healthy amount of old forest today and into the future. However, unlike other long-lived forests such as British Columbia's coastal rainforests that can live 250 years or more, Saskatchewan's forests are considered old at around 100 years.

Forest management plans must identify and conserve areas of old and very old forest.



Forest Harvesting

Harvesting cannot entirely replicate wildfire. However, it is an important tool to create healthy landscapes, strong communities and a robust economy.



The goal of natural forest pattern harvesting is to create a healthy, diverse and resilient forest landscape that promotes biodiversity while supporting the sustainable use of Saskatchewan's forests.

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