

SOUTH FREEZY LAKE OLD GROWTH FOREST, ONTARIO

CONSERVING OLD GROWTH BIODIVERSITY

Photo:
Nature Conservancy of Canada

OTHER EFFECTIVE AREA BASED CONSERVATION MEASURE (OECM)

Near the southwestern edge of Algonquin Park hides a forest within a forest. Known as the South Freezy Lake Old Growth Forest, it is a privately owned managed forest that has been recognized as an Other Effective area-based Conservation Measure (OECM), and the first OECM in Canada to be led by the forest industry.

The South Freezy Lake Old Growth Forest is home to sugar maples, eastern hemlocks, American beeches, and white pines, with some trees more than 150 years old. Part of Haliburton Forest & Wild Life Reserve, Canada's first forest certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, the South Freezy Lake Old Growth Forest is a relatively small 20-hectare area with immense ecological significance. Surrounded by wetlands and steep cliffs, the area is naturally difficult to access and has no history of industrial activity, allowing the site to maintain the

classic features and habitat of an old growth forest.

Conserved by Haliburton Forest & Wild Life Reserve Ltd., with support from the Nature Conservancy of Canada, the South Freezy Lake Old Growth Forest has been recognized by the Governments of Ontario and Canada as being part of the network of protected and conserved areas across Canada. The site will continue to be monitored to ensure the forest structure and biodiversity are maintained. The company has also voluntarily included South Freezy Lake as a priority site for monitoring, providing additional oversight to help ensure the area is kept healthy and resilient for years to come.



HOW DO WE KNOW THAT THE SOUTH FREEZY LAKE OLD GROWTH FOREST IS AN OECM?

Does the property have a defined geographical space?

Yes! Located within Haliburton Forest, the boundaries of the South Freezy Lake Old Growth Forest are well identified and can be accurately placed on a map.

Is there an effective way of ensuring that biodiversity will continue to be conserved into the future?

Yes! The lands are fully owned by Haliburton Forest, which has a Forest Management Plan in place, including a no-harvest policy for old growth areas like the South Freezy Lake Old Growth Forest. Haliburton Forest is also certified by the Forest Stewardship Council, which requires that Forest Management Plans and related policies are followed.

Is there an expectation that the biodiversity on the site will be conserved for the long term?

Yes! Haliburton Forest intends to keep the South Freezy Lake Old Growth Forest area set aside from harvest for the long term, and is committed to following its forest management planning process.

Is biodiversity conservation the primary objective of the area?

No – and that's okay! Sustainable forests are managed to achieve a variety of environmental, social, and economic objectives. Ongoing forest management activities help maintain the ecological functions and species in parts of the forest without harvesting or other industrial activities. This allows set-asides like the South Freezy Lake Old Growth Forest to contribute to the overall health of Haliburton Forest.

Quick tip

If this answer was "yes" for the South Freezy Lake Old Growth Forest it would likely be assessed as a Protected Area. Both types of areas are important and both achieve biodiversity conservation.

Is biodiversity on the site conserved?

Yes! As clearly set out in its Forest Management Plan, there will be no timber harvesting, resource extraction or development in the South Freezy Lake Old Growth Forest. Instead, the forest will be left to grow and develop on its own, maintaining its biodiversity and ecological functions into the future.