

UPDATE

CATCHACOMA FOREST CONSERVATION

BY: THE CATCHACOMA FOREST STEWARDASHIP COMMITTEE (CFSC)

WHAT IS THE CFSC?

We are a group advocating for a moratorium on logging in a 660 hectare public forest north of Catchacoma Lake, east of the 507.

The Catchacoma Forest is home to the largest known mature and old-growth eastern hemlock forest in Canada, according to Ancient Forest Exploration & Research (AFER) studies. Old forests have important non-timber value for their role in carbon storage, wildlife habitat and for recreation, education and research. We've been building the case for conservation for Catchacoma **but we need your help.**

The next month is crucial for the future of the Forest. The 10-year logging plan is in review and we need you to speak up to stop logging while we seek conservation status for Catchacoma old growth.



WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO

Since January 2020 the CFSC has:

- held public hikes to highlight the conservation values of the Forest
- commissioned additional field research
- submitted comments to 2 phases of the 2021-2031 Forest Management planning process
- engaged with other organizations and the municipality to submit comments in support of conservation
- Met with MPP Dave Smith
- Investigated possibilities to apply for conservation status



THE GOOD NEWS

The current draft logging plan has put 50 per cent of the forest in "contingency" harvest, meaning it is less likely to be harvested in the near future (area A on map) The area of the forest logged in 2019-2021 (area B) has been spared additional harvest for 2021-31

THE BAD NEWS

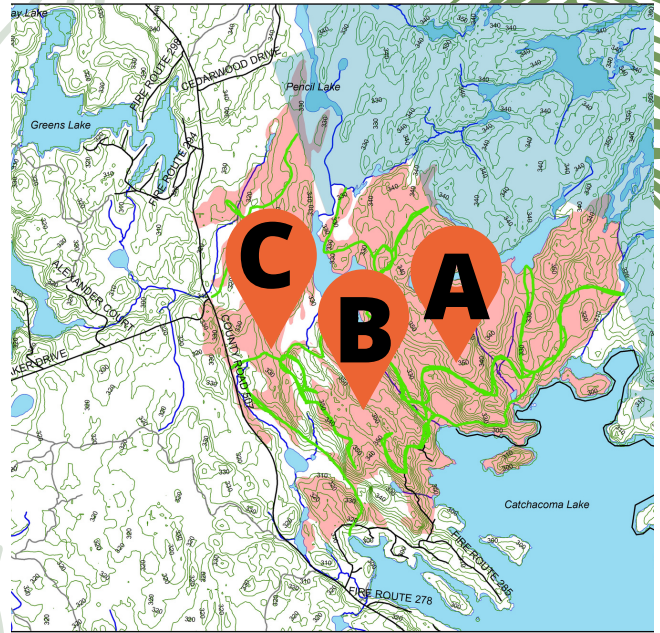
Despite calls for a pause to logging while the conservation values of Catchacoma are further assessed, large sections were cut this winter in Area B, including trees over 140 years old (the age of onset for old growth for hemlock). Skidder trails now crisscross the area .

Another 1/5 of the forest is on the chopping block for 2021-2031 (area C) and a more intensive form of harvest is proposed (shelter wood as opposed to selection harvest).

The CFSC believes more logging will compromise the potential for the forest to reach an old growth state and the associated carbon sequestration, habitat, education and recreation values. While hemlock can grow to 600 years of age, logging will stunt this ability and likely encourage regrowth of more "profitable" timber species such as pine and hardwood. This is partly why old hemlock forests are so rare.



Image: from March 2021-AFER lead ecologist with harvested hemlock logs — hemlock is one of the least profitable of timbers.



WHAT'S NEXT

The last date for comment on the 10-year logging plan is May 17. We will be sharing our own submission to reiterate the call for a moratorium on logging. The CFSC is also currently applying for a land-use amendment for the Catchacoma — we are looking for groups to sign on to both of those initiatives.

We are also holding community events to gather more ecological information for the area.

To find out more about any of these ways to get involved, please email the CFSC through katie@wildernesscommittee.org.

Check out the latest AFER reports at <https://www.peterboroughgrowth.ca/research-reports>

The draft Forest Management Plan and how to submit comments can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3tcdLxP>