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FORESTRY

IN BIG LAKES COUNTY, ALBERTA
#GOBIGLAKES



TURN WOOD INTO WEALTH

Forestry in Big Lakes County is big business. Lumber products from our region can be found in dozens of countries around the world. And we've just scratched the surface of what's possible for profits. [LEARN MORE →](#)

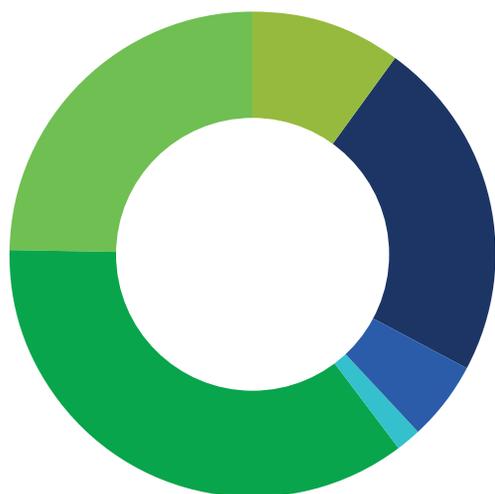


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There are seven land-use regions in Alberta. Big Lakes County belongs to the Upper Athabasca Region, which is the *third* most forested region in the province and the *top* region in the province in terms of lumber harvesting.

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL TIMBER VOLUME HARVESTED BY ALBERTA LAND-USE REGIONS



- Lower Athabasca 10.08%
- Lower Peace 22.56%
- North Saskatchewan . . . 6.15%
- Red Deer 0.03%
- South Saskatchewan . . . 1.72%
- Upper Athabasca 35.06%
- Upper Peace 24.41%

Source: Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, May 2013 –April 2014

A TOP HARVESTING REGION



The Upper Athabasca Region accounts for 13.7 percent of Alberta's total forests by area and approximately 35.1 percent of Alberta's total lumber volume harvested annually.

As of 2014, there were a total of 12 Forest Management Agreement (FMA)¹ holders (out of 20 in the province) with lumber allocations in the Upper Athabasca Region, five of

which are located in Big Lakes County.

Big Lakes County had an estimated 1,450,000 cubic metres of forest approved for annual allowable cut (AAC)² in 2014 — which makes up approximately 18.1 percent of the Upper Athabasca Region's annual allowable cut area and approximately 4.7 percent of Alberta's total annual allowable cut area.

1 – A large, area-based agreement between Alberta and a company, giving the company rights to establish, grow, harvest and removed timber from a defined area of Crown land and ensure activities are carried out in a sustainable manner. An FMA is typically granted for 20 years and are renewable.

2 – The Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) is the annual amount of timber that can be harvested on a sustainable basis within a defined forest area. The AAC is measured in cubic metres and is based on what the forest will grow.

LEADERS IN INNOVATION

Trailblazing in forestry is tradition in Big Lakes County. In the 1950s, Buchanan Lumber was one of the first to bring logs to the sawmill instead of the other way around. When West Fraser bought Buchanan Lumber in 2014, the multi-national company began a strategy, worth tens of millions, to enhance its harvest capacity and upgrade the plant. Today, West Fraser's High Prairie Forest Products has one of 6 continuous dry kilns in Canada. This kind of innovation and others make West Fraser an industry leader in quality stud and premium grade lumber.



FORESTRY QUICK-FACTS

67% of **BIG LAKES COUNTY** is covered in forest



SPECIES:

- Aspen Poplar
- Balsam Poplar
- Balsam Fir
- Lodgepole Pine
- White Birch
- White Spruce
- Larch (Tamarack)



ALBERTA'S TOP EXPORTS

Alberta comes fourth in exports of forestry products in Canada. The province represented approximately 8.1 percent of total Canadian forestry exports, with a value of \$2.85 billion in 2016.

Out of Alberta's top 25 exported products for 2016, three were from the forestry sector — pulp mill products; sawmill & wood preservation products (dimension lumber); and veneer, plywood, & engineered wood products. The forestry industry in Big Lakes County is involved in the production of all these manufactured products.

TABLE: ALBERTA'S WOOD EXPORTS 2016

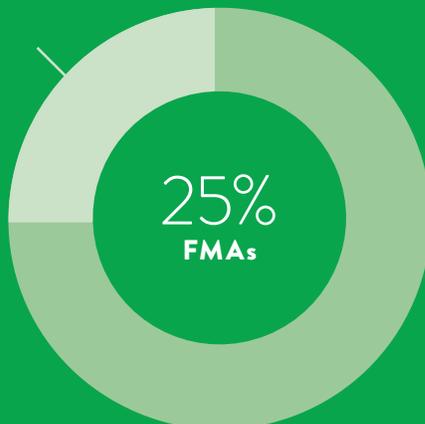
EXPORT PRODUCT	VALUE (BILLIONS OF CAD)	RANK IN ALBERTA EXPORTS
Pulp Mill Products	\$1.57	8
Sawmills & Wood Preservation Products (Dimension Lumber)	\$0.59	13
Veneer, Plywood & Engineered Wood Products	\$0.48	14

Top international export markets for Alberta's forestry products include the United States of America, China, Japan, South Korea, and Philippines.

Source: Trade Data Online, 2016



Out of Alberta's 20 **FOREST MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS (FMAs)**, 5 are located within Big Lakes County.



... and has **1.4 MILLION CUBIC METERS** of forest approved for logging each year;



... that's **4.5%** of Alberta's total annual allowable cut area



A SKILLED WORKFORCE

Big Lakes County is home to forestry entrepreneurs and an highly skilled, experienced, and educated workforce. In fact, many Big Lakes County residents have worked in the forestry sector at some point in time. According to Statistics Canada, the trend for employment in the Alberta and Athabasca region forestry sectors, from 2014 to 2015, is upward overall.

According to the 2015 Canadian Business Patterns Survey, Big Lakes is home to a total 34 registered businesses working in the forestry sector out of the 1,739 total forestry businesses in Alberta.

The largest of these companies is multinational West Fraser Timber Co.. West Fraser’s High Prairie Forest Products employs 133 people directly and 300 year-round contract workers. The facility is the only stud mill in West Fraser’s operations. The company acquired the mill from Gordon Buchanan Enterprises in 2014. The company’s long-term goal is to expand its current production from 110 million board feet. Recent additions or planned additions to the facility include a new kiln, a new sorter/stack system, and a new weigh scale. West Fraser shares a Forest Management Agreement with Tolko Industries Ltd., a company that once operated in the county and in 2016 began revisiting its business prospects in the area.

TABLE: REGISTERED BUSINES COUNTS FOR BIG LAKES FORESTRY SECTOR

FORESTRY SECTOR GROUPS	BIG LAKES	ALBERTA
Forestry & Logging	19	792
Support Activities	9	408
Wood Manufacturing	6	510
Paper Manufacturing	0	29
Total Business Counts in Forestry Sector	34	1,739

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Patterns, 2016

BIG OPPORTUNITIES IN BIOINDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS

There are an estimated 200,000 tonnes of forest residue and 300,000 tonnes of agriculture residue contained within the county and the 30-40km radius around it. Bioindustrial products are the bioenergy, biochemicals, and biomaterials made from biomass. Biomass includes agriculture and forestry fibre, byproducts, and other feedstocks such as livestock manure and municipal solid waste. Traditional bioproduct examples are biofuels and pellets and firelogs. The trend is towards higher-value products generated by new technologies that utilize biomass. These may include:

There are many resources available for companies that are involved in creating bioproducts. This sector is viewed as important for diversifying the economy, strengthening rural economies, and offering alternative — and in some cases environmentally sustainable and higher performing — options to consumers.

Big Lakes is well positioned for businesses involved in the bioeconomy. Please contact us to explore opportunities for growth and investment.



BIOPLASTICS



**SPECIALTY
CHEMICALS**



**COMPOSITE
MATERIALS**



BIOENERGY



**CELLULOSE
NANOCRYSTALS**



ABOUT BIG LAKES COUNTY

Big Lakes County is one of 64 rural municipal districts in Alberta, situated 365 kilometres northwest of Edmonton, the province's capital city.

Total Area: 13,942.43 sq. km.

Total population in this area: 16,832

- » 52% Indigenous (First Nations or Métis)
- » A small, but diverse immigrant population

Hamlets: Enilda, Jossard, Faust, Kinuso, and Grouard

Major Parks: Hilliard's Bay Provincial Park and Winagami Lake Provincial Park

Major Lakes: Lesser Slave Lake, Winagami Lake, and Snipe Lake

Municipal Tax Rates (in millions):

- » Residential/Farmland: 4.25
- » Non-Residential: 14.5

Property Tax Rates (in millions):

- » Residential/Farmland: 6.7674
- » Non-Residential: 18.2084



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Our visionary, coordinated, and ambitious economic development leadership is available to provide you with more information and to facilitate your success. Please contact Big Lakes County Economic Development Authority at ecdev@biglakescounty.ca.

For up-to-date statistics on Big Lakes County, access the following resources:

The Government of Alberta Regional Dashboard:
regionaldashboard.alberta.ca/region/big-lakes

Townfolio's interactive data profile on Big Lakes County:
townfolio.co/ab/big-lakes