

## Old-Growth Forest Policy Interpretation Bulletin No. 01-2022

This interpretation supports the operational definition for recently treated forest areas in section 3.0 “Definition of Old-Growth Forest”.

The policy states: *“Because old-growth forest areas are best considered as characterized by relatively little recent human disturbance . . . , no forest areas that have received a silvicultural treatment since 1990 will be considered as old-growth forest areas, provided there is documentation of the treatment.”*

This statement serves to operationalize the definition of old-growth forest areas to exclude areas with recent silvicultural treatment.

The statement applies to the forest areas that have received a uniform silviculture treatment. Uniform silviculture treatment includes the harvest areas, harvest trails, the intended regeneration areas, and unharvested patches within the treatment area. For example, in a strip-cut silviculture treatment, this would include the strips removed and the forest areas between the strips. Another example is a group selection; the treated area includes the groups (patches) cut and the forest areas adjoining that area planned as future group removals. In both cases, the treated forest area would not include any areas of the block or forest inventory stands that were not part of the planned uniform treatment. This could include moose habitat patches, stream buffers, areas with operational limitations, sensitive forest groups or areas just not included in the operational plan.

The statement intentionally uses the term forest areas. Forest area refers to the actual forest area that has received the treatment. Forest areas are not necessarily synonymous or coincident with forest inventory stands. Although field-based assessments start with the forest inventory stand polygons, the stand boundaries may have to change as a consequence of the treatment layout. Once a treatment has occurred in a portion of the forest inventory stand, the forest inventory stand is no longer valid or representative of the forest area. In due course, the original forest inventory stand will be appropriately re-mapped in the inventory to reflect the spatial configuration of the silvicultural treatment.

Example:

The red area (Area B) is a previously treated forest area within one forest inventory polygon.

The forest inventory polygon should now be considered as three separate forest areas. The red area (Area B) cannot be defined as old-growth because of the recent timber wood harvest. The green areas will still need to be assessed for old-growth, as long as they are at least 1 hectare in area (Area A and C).

