

# **A Collaborative Approach Contributing to Conservation Areas Planning in Northeast Alberta and Northwest Saskatchewan**

## Project Overview

## CONSERVATION AREAS NETWORK PROJECT

As Forest Stewardship Council®-certified companies, both Mistik Management Ltd. (Mistik) (FSC®-C006014) and Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc. (Al-Pac) (FSC®-C022642) are committed to identifying and working within their respective 'spheres of influence' to advocate for legislative protection of representative sample areas of native ecosystems within and adjacent to their Forest Management Agreement (FMA) areas.

To facilitate boreal conservation, they are implementing ecosystem-based management on their respective FMA areas, in combination with existing and proposed protected areas, to contribute to the maintenance of biodiversity and social/cultural values within their tenures and the broader region. Legislatively protected areas and other forms of conservation lands comprise an important component of land use zonation at a provincial, national and international level. In response to the Convention on Biological Diversity's 'Aichi Targets'<sup>1</sup> established under the 2010 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, Canada (2015), Canada adopted a suite of national targets (2020 Biodiversity Goals and Targets for Canada). Goal A Target 1 for Canada states: *"By 2020, at least 17% of terrestrial areas and inland waters, and 10% of marine and coastal areas of Canada, are conserved through networks of protected areas and other effective area-based measures"*. Among the project objectives of Conservation 2020 is to *"...encourage efforts among governments and land management partners to contribute to Canada Target 1..."* and to consider conservation where the network *"...includes areas of importance to biodiversity and ecosystem services that together achieve ecological representation"*. Similarly, at a provincial level, both Alberta and Saskatchewan recognize protected areas as components of a provincial suite of tools for combining conservation of biodiversity with economic and social aspects of societal demands.

In 2017, the companies joined forces with the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society's (CPAWS) Northern Alberta and Saskatchewan Chapters and Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) to collaboratively identify a network of candidate areas that represent the landscape that can be conserved through various conservation mechanisms. In 2018, the scope of the project was expanded to include development of recommendations to support the recovery and protection of boreal caribou, and provision of multi-species benefits.

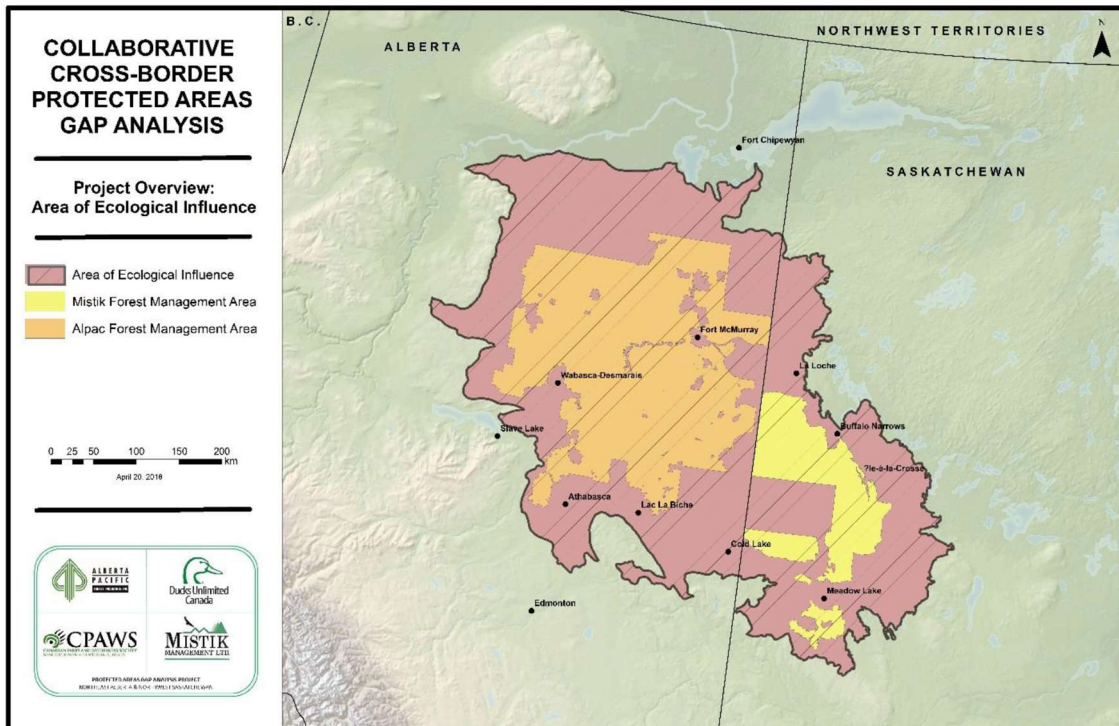
The project objectives are to propose a network of candidate areas (terrestrial and inland waters, including existing protected areas) representing the landscape through a range of scenarios that can be conserved through various mechanisms including protected areas, special management areas and other effective area-based conservation measures. **As a first step in the process, the project team conducted a protected areas gap analysis and had this report reviewed by Dr. Shawn Leroux; copies of these reports are available upon request.**

### Study Area

The study area will span the Alberta/Saskatchewan border using the tenure areas of Al-Pac and Mistik to anchor a larger, ecologically-based area of ecological influence.

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<sup>1</sup> **Target 11** By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes (<https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>)



**Project Partners**

- • Ducks Unlimited Canada
- • Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (Northern Alberta and Saskatchewan Chapters)
- • Mistik Management Ltd.
- • Alberta-Pacific Forest Industries Inc.