

THE BOREAL FOREST: Quick Facts

- 🐾 The world's boreal forest (meaning north or northern forest) wraps around the northern hemisphere like a green cloak. This vast ecosystem is easily seen from space and is sometimes referred to as Earth's green halo.
- 🐾 The boreal forest is found in Russia, Canada and Alaska and Scandinavia. The original boundary of Russia's portion of the Boreal is larger than Canada's, but much is fragmented and lost due to development.
- 🐾 Overall the boreal forest spans 12,000 kilometres, covering nearly 11 per cent of our planet's total surface. This makes it the biggest terrestrial ecosystem on Earth.
- 🐾 Boreal forests are ecologically sensitive places and are easily damaged. Soils are cold and often very shallow. Growing seasons are short. Nutrient cycling is typically slow. Trees are relatively small and slow growing.
- 🐾 The boreal forest is home to hardwood trees like birch and trembling aspen but is dominated by coniferous trees such as spruce, fir, and pine.
- 🐾 The boreal forest is a key resource for all citizens of this globe. It filters our water, keeps our air clean, helps regulate climate and sustains a vast variety of living organisms, including human beings. The forest works hard for us. On an average day, this boreal region is responsible for filtering tens of millions of litres of water, rebuilding soils, restoring nutrients, storing carbon and producing oxygen, holding back floodwaters or releasing needed water into rivers and streams, combating erosion and providing food and shelter.
- 🐾 An incredible array of wildlife live in the boreal forest, including wood bison, snowshoe hare, marten, whooping crane, great gray owl, lynx, and hundreds of species of songbirds. It is the last stronghold for many species at risk, such as woodland caribou (*Rangifer tarandus caribou*) and wolverine (*Gulo gulo*).
- 🐾 Here in Canada, the boreal forest supports our economy and inspires many cultures. It is home to people whose daily lives are intrinsically linked to the well being of the forest. Hundreds of Aboriginal communities across Canada still practice their traditional ways of life and depend upon the forest for food, medicines and an economic livelihood.
- 🐾 The boreal forest is part of our national identity. As Canadians, we are in a unique position to set an example that the world can follow. We are stewards of one of the world's last intact ecosystems.

http://www.cpaws-sask.org/boreal_forest/about_forests_facts.html

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