The province has been divided into six Fire Management Zones based on common management objectives, land use, fire load, and forest ecology.

This appendix provides operational information and management direction for fire response in all Fire Management Zones.

# Southern Ontario Zone

## Description

The Southern Ontario Zone is located Outside the Fire Region (OFR) and is generally south of the Area of the Undertaking for forest management. Municipalities have a mandate to provide forest fire protection on all lands outside the fire region.

The Southern Ontario Zone (figure 7) is primarily urban, rural agricultural and forested lands and is heavily populated. Values are dense across the Zone and any wildland fire has the potential to threaten property and cause social disruption. Municipalities provide fire protection but look to the fire management program for assistance on wildland fire issues.

Threatened and valuable remnants of the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence and Carolinian forests, including Tallgrass Prairie and Oak Savannah, require fire to survive in this highly developed landscape. This is usually accomplished through the application of prescribed fire.

The Southern Ontario Zone reflects the role municipalities provide in the delivery of forest fire response. In the Southern Ontario Zone, municipalities have the lead in fire protection and management activities, under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act (FPPA) and through municipal by-laws. The OMNR remains accountable for fires on crown land

## Management Objectives

- Support the ecological role of fire in unique or threatened ecosystems by providing advice to stakeholders and conducting prescribed burning, within capacity.
- Ensure OMNR obligations on Crown lands are met.
- Ensure municipalities meet the objectives of the Forest Fires Prevention Act (i.e. to protect human lives and properties) in their wildfire management role in Southern Ontario.

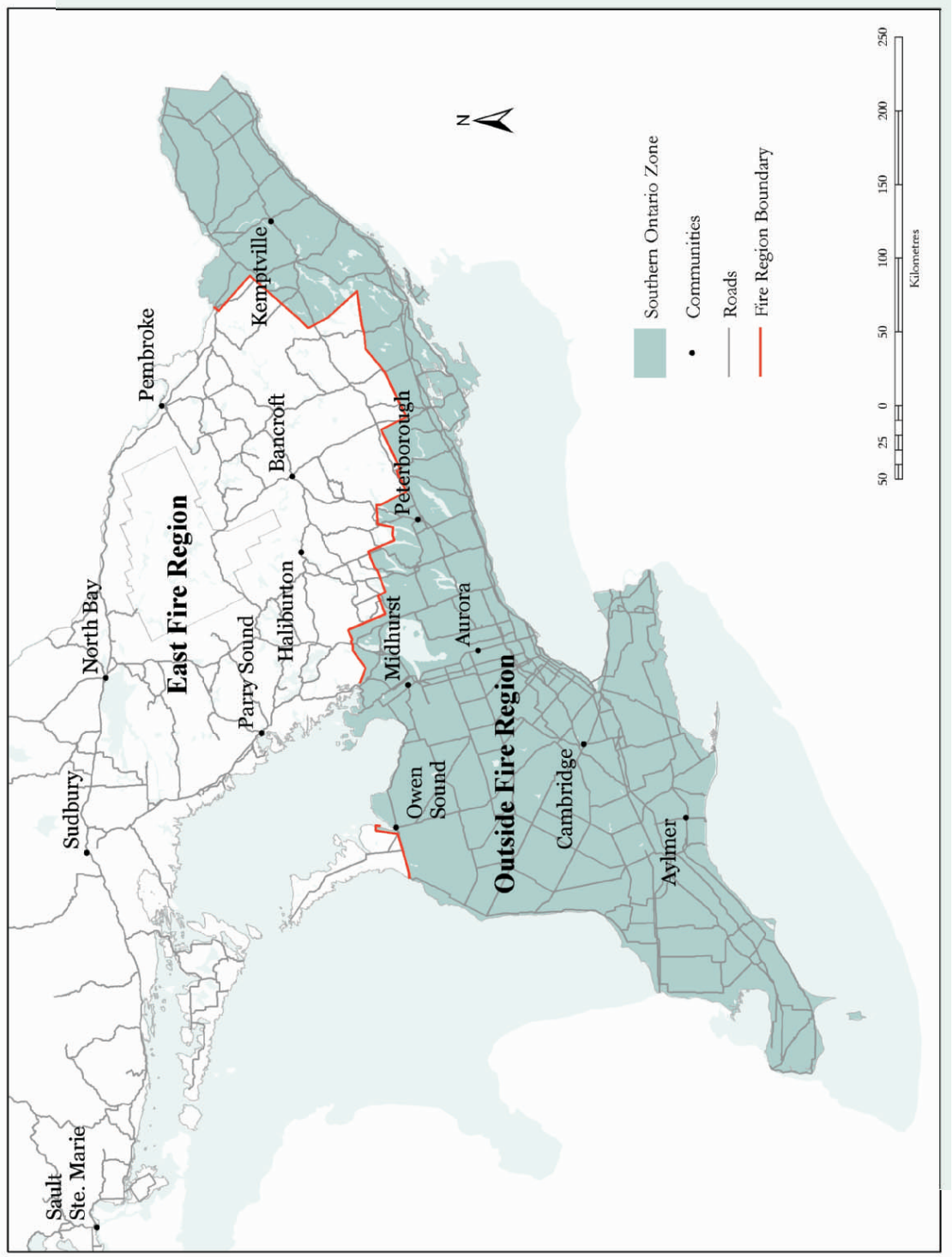



Figure 7 - **Southern Ontario Zone**

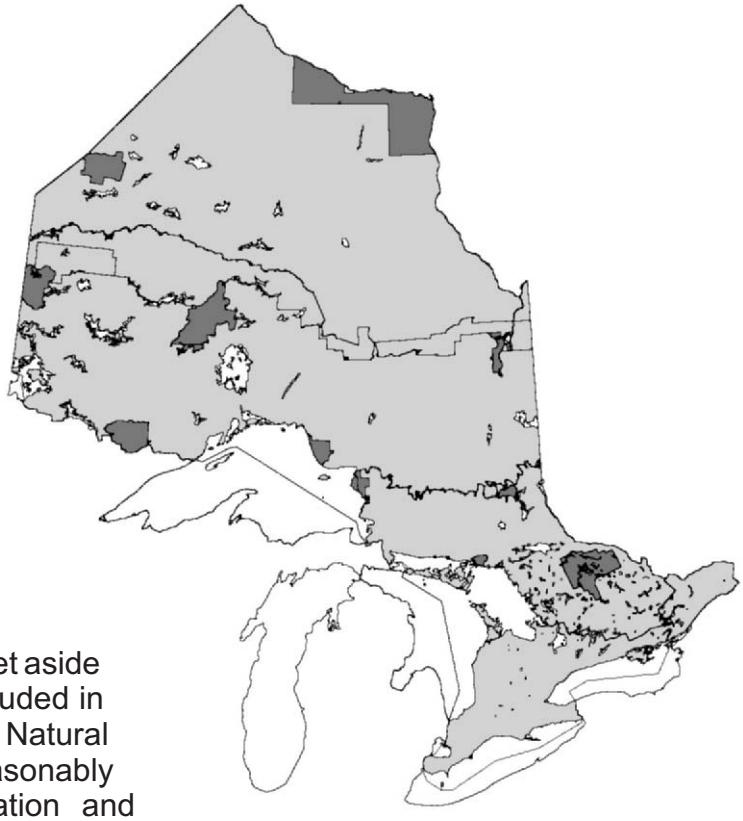
## Management Direction

- Municipalities are responsible for appropriate fire response on all forest fires to protect life, property and infrastructure in accordance with the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act* (FPPA).
- OMNR will provide support to municipalities in event of extraordinary wildland fire situations on a cost-recovery basis when requested. If OMNR is requested to assist a municipality, the cost of OMNR suppression activities will be charged to the municipality.
- Provincial Parks will negotiate fire protection support with their local municipality.
- Fire suppression resources will be positioned adjacent to this Zone according to the anticipated fire load.
- Prescribed burning is recognized as a management tool with which to meet ecosystem renewal or hazard reduction objectives within this Zone. The Private Sector will be encouraged to deliver non complex Prescribed Burns. OMNR will conduct complex Prescribed Burns on a cost recovery basis
- OMNR will conduct Prescribed Burns in Provincial Parks with Prescribed Burn programs.

## Amending the Fire Region Boundary:

Although the Fire Region boundary has not been revised during the development of this *Strategy*, the location of the fire region boundary will be periodically revisited through combined dialogue with Municipalities. If adjustments are required, the amendment process will be followed to effect changes to this *Strategy*.

# Parks Zone



## Description

Ontario's Parks and Protected Areas are designed to protect significant natural and cultural environments while providing ample and safe recreational opportunities.

The Parks Zone (figure 8) was created in recognition of the fact that fire is an essential ecological process fundamental to ecosystem health and sustainability. Fire is now underrepresented in many of Ontario's provincial parks and other protected areas.

Approximately 60% of the 9.6 million hectares set aside in parks in Ontario are in the Parks Zone. Included in the parks zone are large Wilderness class and Natural Environment class parks where fire can reasonably achieve a more natural role in the restoration and maintenance of the integrity, health and sustainability of the ecosystems these parks were designed to protect.

As with all parks, the health and safety of park visitors and park infrastructure is the utmost priority and will be protected while fire management objectives identified in Park Management Plans (PMP) are achieved.

Provincial parks not included in the Parks Zone, will be treated as directed in their respective Park Management Plans. In the absence of a Park Management Plan, the fire strategy for the surrounding fire management zone will apply.

### *Table 2 - Parks Located in the Parks Zone*

| Regulated Park Name | Class * | Size (ha) | Operating Park | Date Est. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Algonquin | NE | 772,300 | Yes | 1893 |
| Kesagami | WI | 55,977 | No | 1983 |
| Killarney | WI | 48,500 | Yes | 1964 |
| Lady Evelyn Smoothwater | WI | 72,400 | No | 1973 |
| Lake Superior | NE | 155,647 | Yes | 1944 |
| Opasquia | WI | 473,000 | No | 1983 |
| Polar Bear | WI | 2,355,200 | No | 1970 |
| Pukaskwa National Park | Federal | 185,128 | Yes | 1978 |
| Quetico | WI | 475,782 | Yes | 1913 |
| Wabakimi | WI | 892,061 | Yes | 1983 |
| Woodland Caribou | WI | 450,000 | Yes | 1983 |
| Total | | 5,935,995 | | |

* WI=Wilderness NE=Natural Environment

## Management Objectives

- Protect park visitors and prevent socio-economic disruption.
- Enable the ecological role of fire as an agent of disturbance for the maintenance of ecosystems and critical habitat.
- Promote a “naturalness” objective to approximate a natural forest and wildlife habitat condition.
- Minimize loss or damage to Provincial Park property, infrastructure and structures.
- Minimize impacts of prescribed fire management programs on adjacent land users and communities through proper planning and sound decision-making.

## Management Direction

- Fires within the Parks Zone will be actioned according to Park Fire Management Plans, or interim direction such as Interim Fire Response Strategies.
- Light on the Land fire suppression techniques will be used, wherever feasible, when protecting sensitive features.
- Fires that threaten park visitor safety or park infrastructure will receive Full Response and sustained action until extinguished.

## Management Direction (con't)

- A fire management plan for Quetico Provincial Park has been developed and provides direction for fire management activities within the park.
- Fire Management Plans will be developed for each Park in the Parks Zone subject to available park resources. In the absence of approved plans, the fire response for each park in the Park Zone will be:
- Fires within Algonquin, Killarney, Lady Evelyn and Lake Superior Provincial Parks will generally receive Full Response and sustained action until extinguished.
- Fires within Wabakimi and Woodland Caribou Provincial Parks will generally receive a:
- Full Response, within the fire management program capacity, as per the Interim Fire Response Strategy. Sustained Action requires the approval of a Fire Assessment Report (FAR).
- Modified and/or Monitored Response will be used in consultation with the Park Zone Manager and/or their designate (i.e. Park Superintendent). The Interim Fire Response Strategy for Wabakimi and Woodland Caribou Provincial Parks will be used to assist in establishing response priorities.
- Fires within Kesagami Park will receive a Full Response within fire management program capacity. All fires will be prioritized and will receive a response commensurate with values at risk and availability of suppression resources. A FAR must be approved for Sustained Action
- Fires within Opasquia and Polar Bear Provincial Parks will generally receive a Monitored Response.
- Parks Canada will manage fires within Pukaskwa National Park according to the Pukaskwa Fire Management Plan. According to an OMNR/Parks Canada Agreement, OMNR will respond to fires near the park border and, if requested, provide assistance within the park according to the Fire Management Plan.
- Prescribed burning and prescribed fire are recognized as a management tools with which to meet ecosystem management or hazard reduction objectives within this Zone. Proponents are encouraged to utilize prescribed burning to meet management objectives.
- Fire suppression resources will be positioned within this Zone according to the anticipated fire load.

## Addition of Parks or Protected Areas to the Parks Zone:

- Amendments to this *Strategy* allows for the addition of parks and protected areas to be added to the Parks Zone, providing the following criteria are met:
- The size of the park or protected area is large enough (generally over 45,000 hectares) to support a Park Fire Management Plan which has significantly different resource and fire objectives than the surrounding Zone;
- The park is of appropriate size and shape such that it can contain a large forest fire within its boundaries.

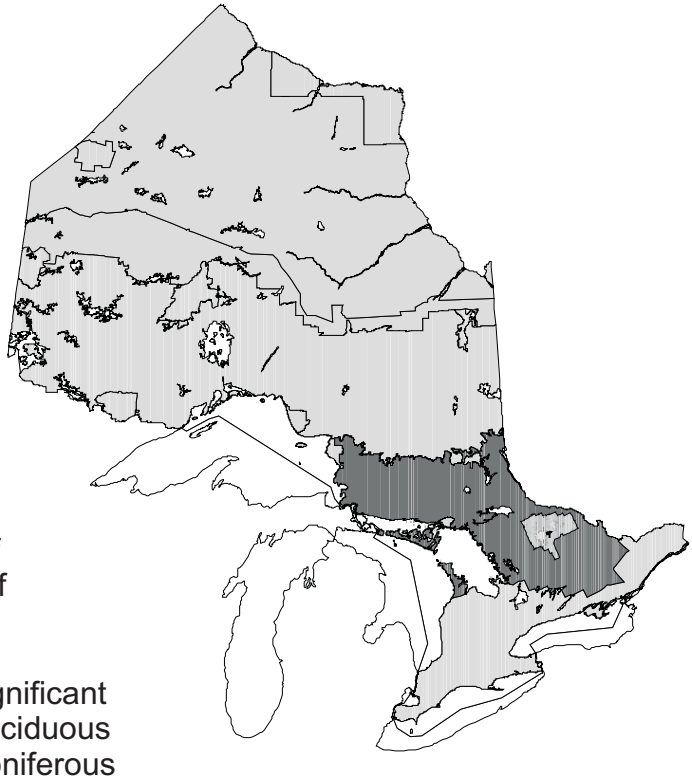
### *Table 3 - Parks Zone Performance Measures*

| Performance Measure | Measure Description | Target |
|---|---|---|
| Fire Response | Initial Action (Full, Modified and Monitored Response) | 96% of fires successfully attacked |
| | Sustained Action (Full, Modified and Monitored Response) | 95% achievement of approved Fire Assessment Report (FAR)* |
| | Response Time | 100% compliance with Resource Preparedness and Response Guidelines* |
| Area Burned | Ecosystem Renewal | 2,500 - 10,000 hectares per year |
| | Hazard Reduction | 0 - 5,000 hectares per year |

** These policies and guidelines will be updated during the first year of the new strategy and reporting of these measures will begin in the second year of the new strategy.*

## *Figure 8 - Parks Zone*

# Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Zone



## Description

The Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Zone (figure 9) is located between the Southern Ontario Zone and the Boreal Zone. The southern boundary of this zone corresponds to the Fire Region boundary as defined by the *Forest Fires Prevention Act* (FFPA) and the northern boundary corresponds to the boundary of Ecoregion 4E (see Figure 5 Ecoregions of Ontario).

The Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Zone is a significant forest region located between the southern deciduous forest of eastern North America and the coniferous boreal forest. This Zone is heavily populated with extensive private land and recreational development throughout. Incorporated municipalities cover much of the Zone but the Crown is the largest landowner and a number of forest companies operate Sustainable Forest Licenses (SFL's).

The Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Zone was created to reflect the “wildland-urban interface” and the large number of people in the area. This Zone was also created to reflect the forest composition and the fire load associated with the Great Lakes / St. Lawrence forest region.

Approximately 460 fires per year burn an average of 2,370 hectares per year in the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Zone. The opportunity for large difficult fires exists, particularly in the northern extent of the Zone. Throughout the Zone, the potential for the negative impact of fire on property and infrastructure is very high due to the density of human development and the area has potential for wildland-urban interface challenges.

The demand for prescribed burning in support of silvicultural programs and ecosystem restoration is increasing.

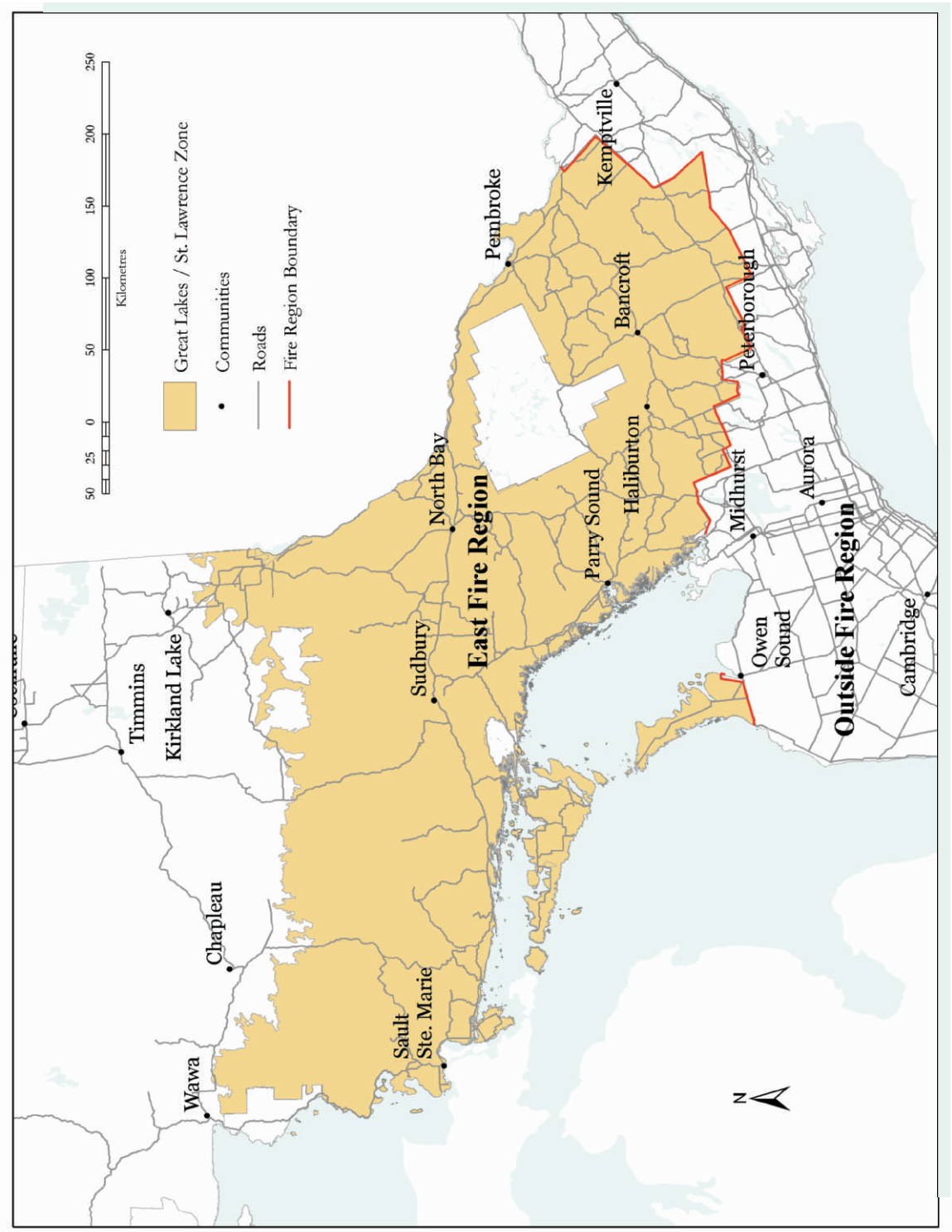



**Figure 9 - Great Lakes / St. Lawrence Zone**

## Management Objectives

- Prevent loss of life, personal injury and socio-economic disruption.
- Minimize loss or damage to private property, infrastructure and isolated structures.
- Minimize area of forest resources burned.
- Provide for effective Initial Action through Agreements with Municipalities.
- Enable the ecological role of fire as an agent of disturbance for the maintenance of ecosystems and critical habitat.
- Enable prescribed fires for forest renewal.

Table 4 - **Great Lakes / St. Lawrence Zone Performance Measures**

| Performance Measure | Measure Description | Target |
|---|---|---|
| Fire Response | Initial Action (Full, Modified and Monitored Response)<br>Sustained Action (Full, Modified and Monitored Response)<br>Response Time | 96% of fires successfully attacked<br>95% achievement of approved Fire Assessment Report (FAR)*<br>100% compliance with Resource Preparedness and Response Guidelines* |
| Area Burned | Forest Depletion<br>Ecosystem Renewal<br>Hazard Reduction | 2100 hectares per year<br>100 - 1000 hectares per year<br>0 - 100 hectares per year |

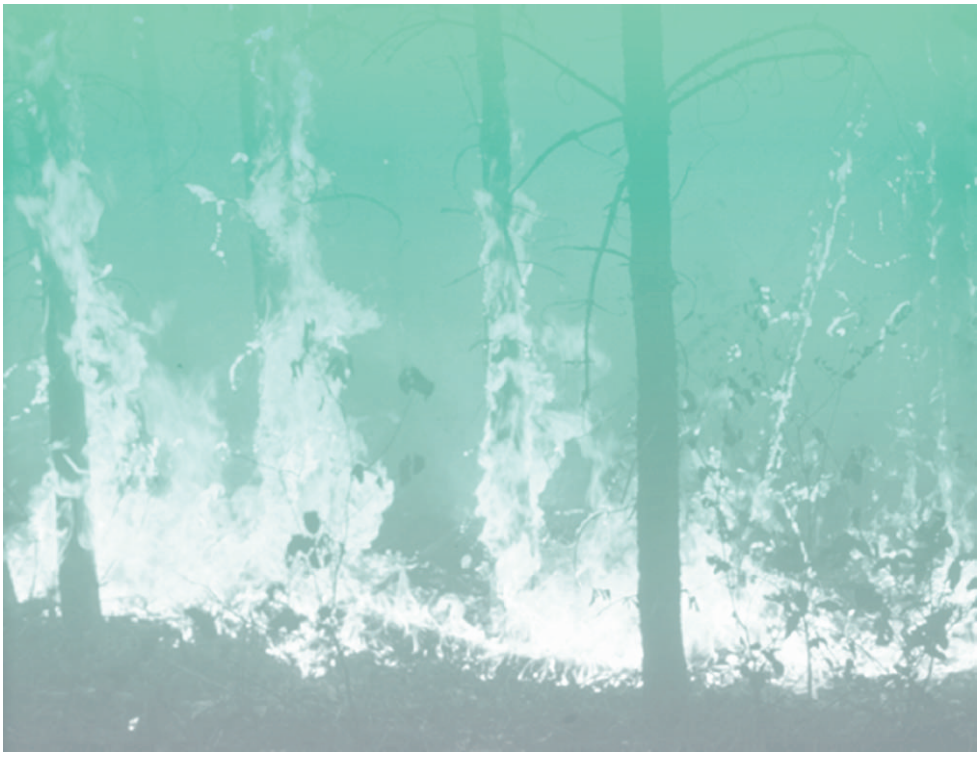
** These policies and guidelines will be updated during the first year of the new strategy and reporting of these measures will begin in the second year of the new strategy.*

## Management Direction

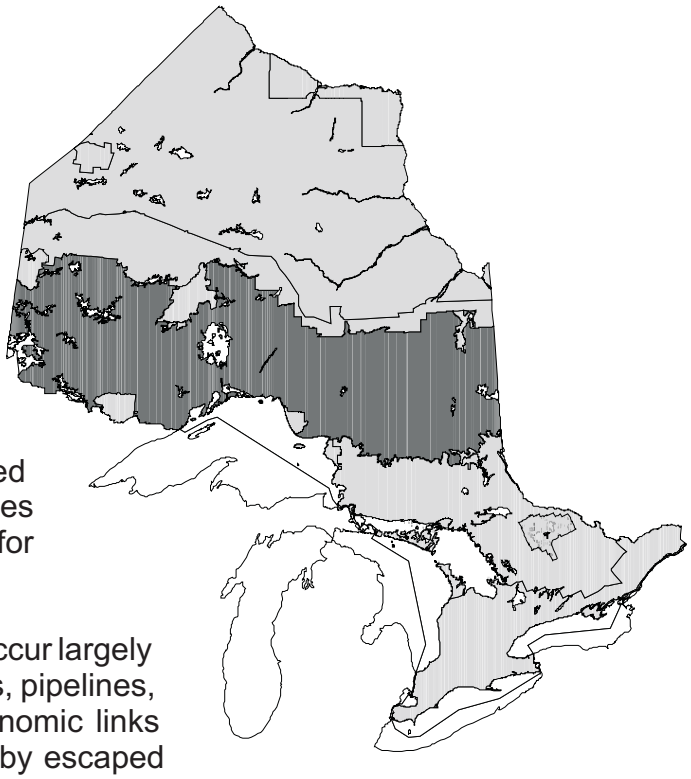
- All fires having the potential to negatively impact values and/or cause social disruption will receive Full Response and sustained action until extinguished.
- Hazard reduction areas identified in approved resource management plans or designated islands identified by resource managers in fire operations plans can be considered for Modified Response.

## Management Direction (con't)

- Designated islands identified by resource managers in fire operations plans may be considered for Monitored Response.
- Wildfire protection action by OMNR for areas under Municipal jurisdiction will be determined by Municipal Agreements. Co-operative programs with industry, incorporated and unincorporated communities and First Nations are encouraged.
- Fire suppression resources will be positioned within this Zone according to the anticipated fire load.
- Municipalities should be prepared to provide fire protection to all land and property within their jurisdiction or as described in negotiated Agreements.
- OMNR will communicate with Municipal Fire Departments to ensure effective response and avoid duplicated effort.
- Prescribed burning and prescribed Fires are recognized as a management tools with which to meet silvicultural, ecosystem management or hazard reduction objectives within this Zone. Proponents are encouraged to utilize prescribed burning to meet management objectives.
- Slash piles may be burned by SFL licensees according to an approved Prescribed Burn Plan.



# Boreal Zone



## Description

The Boreal Zone (figure 10) covers 34.6% of the province and is situated between the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence Zone to the south and the Northern Boreal Zone to the north. The forested portion of this Zone is licensed under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA).

The economy of the Boreal Zone is closely linked to the harvest and processing of natural resources and the protection of wood supply is a priority for stakeholders in this Zone.

Population and infrastructure within this Zone occur largely along Highways 11 and 17. Railways, highways, pipelines, and hydroelectric corridors are important economic links throughout the area, which may be disrupted by escaped fires.

Recreational and resource-based tourism properties are generally isolated in this Zone but are often important values at risk in the event of an escaped fire. Forest access roads are the only ground access to many areas of the Zone and effective fire management depends more heavily on aircraft than in the Zones located further south.

The Boreal Zone was created to reflect the licensed forest of the Boreal Forest Region and its forest composition, in addition to the fire load associated with this forest region. The Boreal Forest Region naturally experiences intense, stand-replacing fire on a regular basis and forest fires in this Zone could result in financial impacts to the economy of Ontario.

Historically, the Boreal Zone experiences between 200 and 2,300 fires per year, which accounts for 51% of all fire occurrences in the province. This represents an average of 61,300 hectares per year. Substantial areas of spruce budworm-damaged forest stands are now present in this Zone, creating a volatile fuel in close proximity to valuable forests and communities.

## Management Objectives

- Prevent loss of life, personal injury and socio-economic disruption.
- Minimize loss or damage to private property, infrastructure and isolated structures.
- Minimize area burned in licensed forest areas.
- Enable the ecological role of fire as an agent of disturbance for hazard reduction, maintenance of ecosystems and critical habitat.
- Enable prescribed burns for forest renewal.

### Table 5 - Boreal Zone Performance Measures

| Performance Measure | Measure Description | Target |
|---|---|---|
| Fire Response | Initial Action (Full, Modified and Monitored Response)<br>Sustained Action (Full, Modified and Monitored Response)<br>Response Time | 96% of fires successfully attacked<br>95% achievement of approved Fire Assessment Report (FAR)*<br>100% compliance with Resource Preparedness and Response Guidelines* |
| Area Burned | Forest Depletion<br>Ecosystem Renewal<br>Hazard Reduction | less than or equal to 55,000 hectares per year<br>2,000 - 5,000 hectares per year<br>0 - 5,000 hectares per year |

** These policies and guidelines will be updated during the first year of the new strategy and reporting of these measures will begin in the second year of the new strategy.*

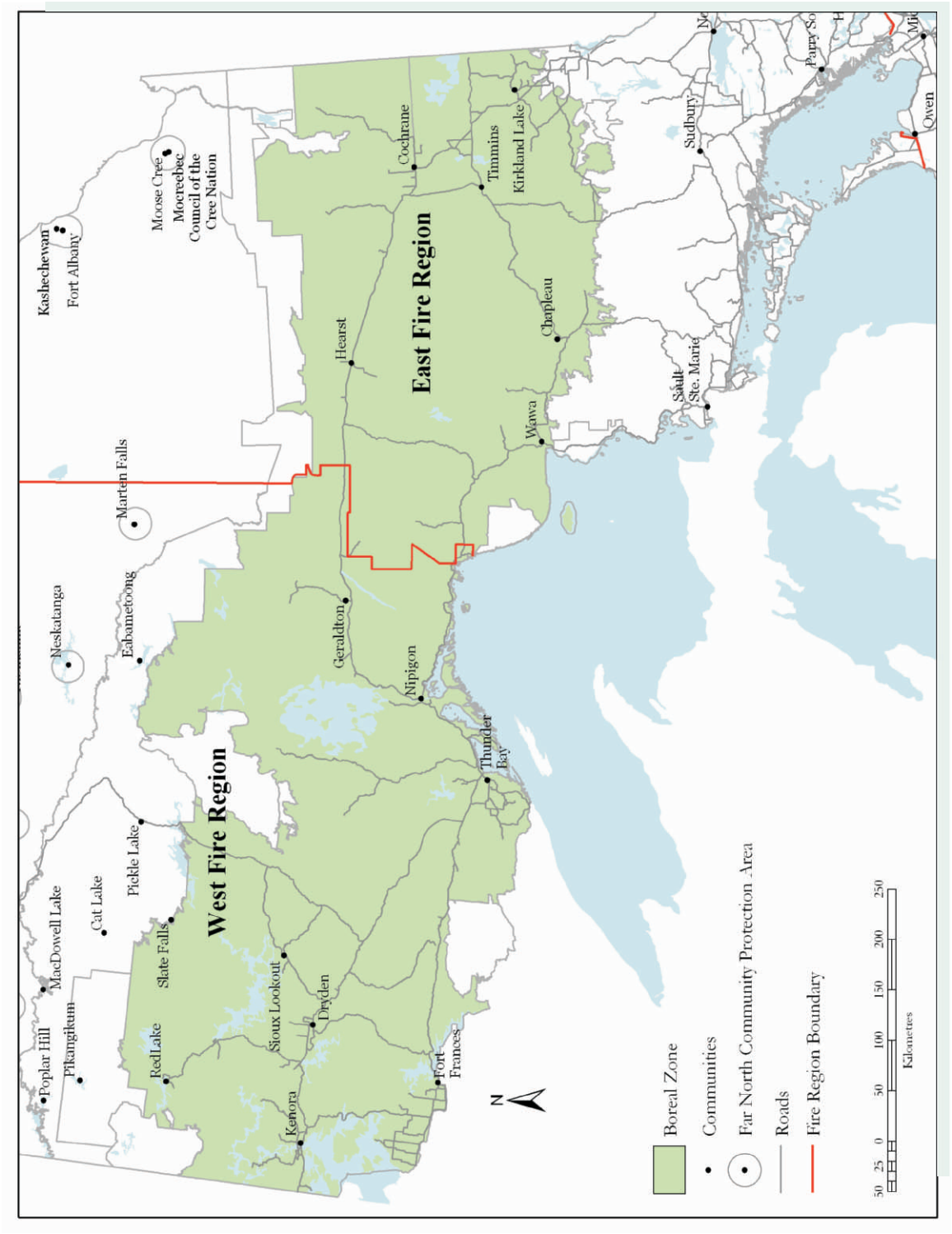
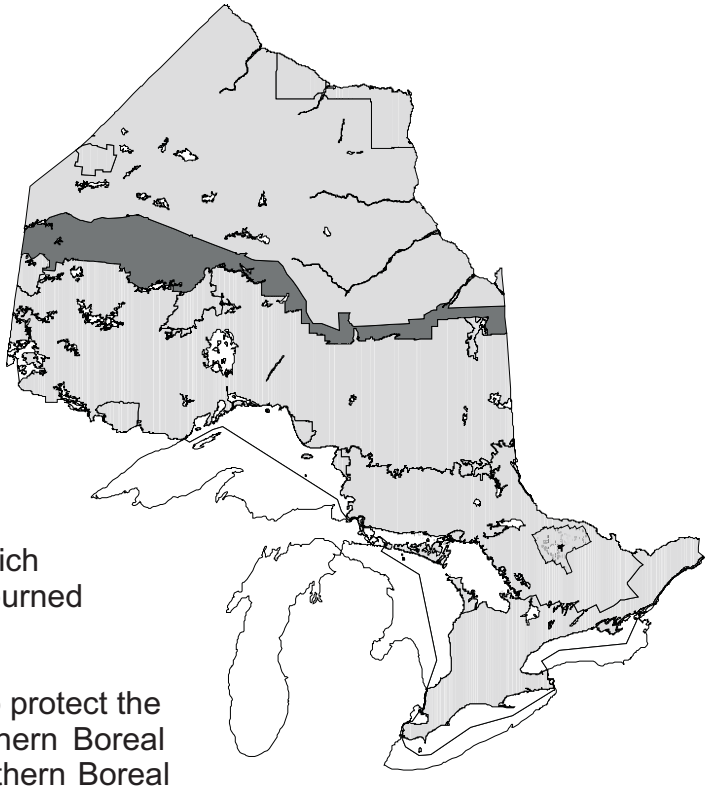



**Figure 10 - Boreal Zone**

## Management Direction

- All fires having the potential to negatively impact values and/or cause social disruption will receive Full Response and sustained action until extinguished.
- Hazard reduction areas identified in approved resource management plans or designated islands identified for hazard reduction by resource managers in fire operations plans can be considered for Modified Response.
- Designated islands or large wetland areas identified by resource managers in fire operations plans may be considered for Monitored Response.
- Wildfire protection action by OMNR for areas under Municipal jurisdiction will be determined by Municipal Agreements. Co-operative programs with industry, incorporated and unincorporated communities and First Nations are encouraged.
- Fire suppression resources will be positioned within this Zone according to the anticipated fire load and resources available.
- Municipalities should be prepared to provide fire protection to all land and property within their jurisdiction or as described in negotiated agreements.
- OMNR will communicate with Municipal Fire Departments to ensure effective response and avoid duplicated effort.
- Prescribed burning and prescribed fires are recognized as a management tools with which to meet silvicultural, ecosystem management or hazard reduction objectives within this Zone. Proponents are encouraged to utilize prescribed burning to meet management objectives.
- Slash piles may be burned by SFL licensees according to an approved Prescribed Burn plan.

# Northern Boreal Zone



## Description

The Northern Boreal Zone (figure 11) is located north of the Boreal Zone and south of the Hudson Bay Zone.

Currently, First Nation communities and resource-based tourism are the most visible economic values within this zone. Forest access roads are beginning to expand into some areas of this Zone.

Approximately 90 fires occur each year, which result in an average of 47,000 hectares burned annually.

The Northern Boreal Zone reflects the need to protect the potential future wood supply within the Northern Boreal Initiative (NBI). Currently, no part of the Northern Boreal Zone is under licence for commercial harvesting; however, several First Nations have expressed an interest in developing new, sustainable commercial forestry opportunities in this Zone. Community-based economic development is expected to expand in this Zone over the next decade. As new Sustainable Forest Licences are negotiated and approved, this *Strategy* will be amended to include these areas in the Boreal Zone.

The Northern Boreal Zone includes the Bak Lake sub-zone, located north of Red Lake, which has a higher level of protection than the remainder of the Zone. This area has been identified under the Northern Boreal Initiative and is proceeding toward the development of a community driven commercial forestry opportunity. As an interim measure, the fire management program has increased the level of protection in this area.

## Management Objectives

- Prevent loss of life, personal injury and socio-economic disruption.
- Provide protection for communities/infrastructure and minimize the occurrence of community evacuations.
- Minimize area burned within the Bak Lake Sub-zone.
- Enable the ecological role of fire as an agent of disturbance for the maintenance of ecosystems and critical habitat.

## Management Direction

- All fires will be prioritized and receive a response commensurate with values at risk and availability of suppression resources.
- All fires within a community will receive a Full Response and sustained action until extinguished.
- Fires occurring in the Community Protection Area surrounding far north communities that are expected to negatively impact the community, cause social disruption and threaten values will receive an appropriate response based on the initial fire report. A Fire Assessment Report (FAR) must be approved for sustained action.
- Fires that do not pose a threat to the community, and ***are not*** expected to negatively impact values and/or cause social disruption will receive a Monitored Response until conditions change.
- Fires in the remainder of the Northern Boreal Zone will receive a monitored response commensurate with values at risk and program capacity.
- Designated islands or large wetland areas identified by resource managers in fire operations plans may be considered for Modified or Monitored Response.
- All fires within the Bak Lake sub-zone will receive Full Response and sustained action until extinguished.
- Fire suppression resources will be positioned within this Zone according to the anticipated fire load.
- Prescribed burning and prescribed fires are recognized as a management tool with which to meet silvicultural, ecosystem management or hazard reduction objectives within this Zone. Proponents are encouraged to utilize prescribed burning to meet management objectives.

## Amendments to the Northern Boreal Zone

As Sustainable Forest Licences (SFL's) under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act (CFSA) are negotiated and licences are issued, these areas may become part of the Boreal Zone using the amendment process.

## Table 6 - Northern Boreal Zone Performance Measure

| Performance Measure | Measure Description | Target |
|---|---|---|
| Fire Response | Initial Action (Full, Modified and Monitored Response - Bak Lake Sub-zone) | 96% of fires successfully attacked |
| | Sustained Action (Full, Modified and Monitored Response - Bak Lake Sub-zone) | 95% achievement of approved Fire Assessment Report (FAR)* |
| | Initial Action (Full, Modified and Monitored Response - remainder of the Zone) | 94% of fires successfully attacked |
| | Sustained Action (Full, Modified and Monitored Response - remainder of the Zone) | 90% achievement according to Fire Assessment Report (FAR)* |
| | Response Time (Full, Modified and Monitored Response- Bak Lake Sub-zone) | 100% compliance with Resource Preparedness and Response Guidelines* |
| | Response Time (Full, Modified and Monitored Response - remainder of the Zone) | Response within Program capacity |
| Area Burned | Forest Depletion | less than or equal to 18,000 hectares per year |
| | Ecosystem Renewal | 5,000 - 20,000 hectares per year |

** These policies and guidelines will be updated during the first year of the new strategy and reporting of these measures will begin in the second year of the new strategy.*

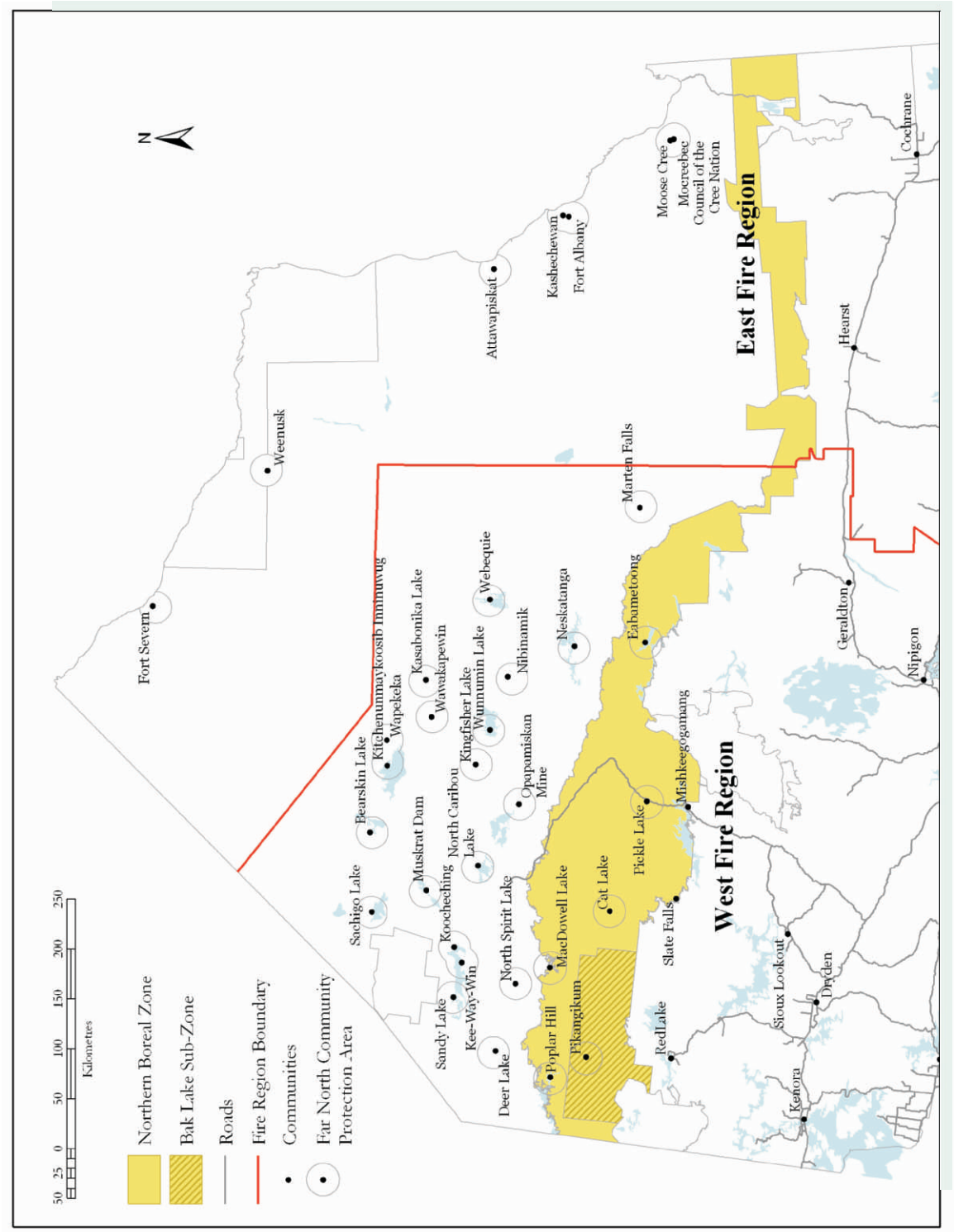
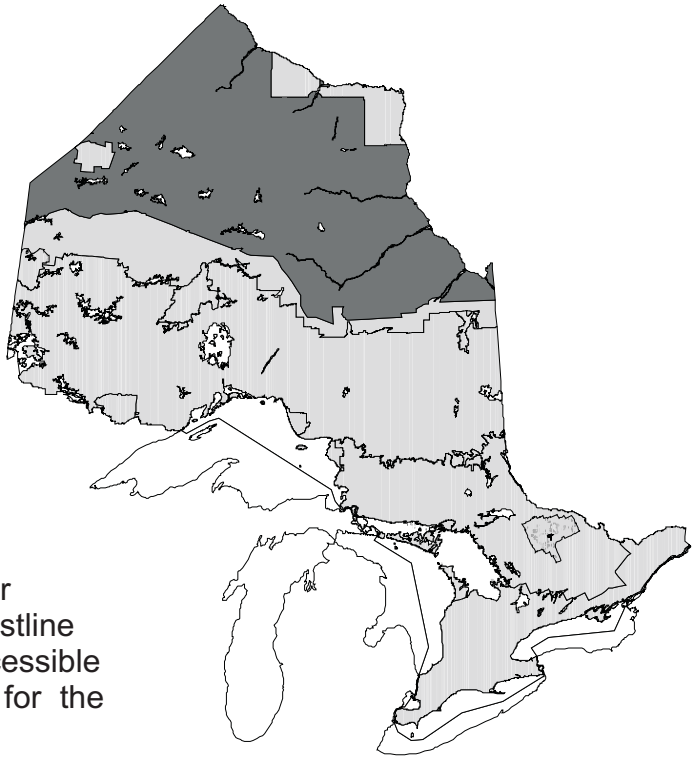



Figure 11 - Northern Boreal Zone

# Hudson Bay Zone



## Description

The Hudson Bay Zone (figure 12) includes the northernmost areas of boreal forest in the west and the James Bay-Hudson Bay Lowlands in the east.

This Zone includes a transition from northern boreal forest through taiga forest into treeless tundra. There are 25 remote First Nation communities located within the zone. These communities, located on the shores of large rivers and lakes, serve as the principal home for more than 15,000 residents. Travel between communities and for traditional land use areas makes use of the coastline and the river systems. Communities are accessible primarily by air and seasonal winter roads for the purpose of development or fire management.

An average of 128,910 hectares burn each year in the Hudson Bay Zone. Known values at risk are primarily centered on First Nation communities and the Mussellwhite mine site. Isolated values related to traditional land use and cultural history are found throughout the western parts of the zone. These values are mainly centered on river systems and the coast in eastern and northern parts of the Zone.

The Hudson Bay Zone was created to promote the ecological role of fire by allowing fire to fulfill its natural role in the ecosystem unless it threatens First Nation communities. Residents of the Zone, represented by the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation have expressed an interest in a partnership for fire management delivery that would reduce the impact of large fires on First Nation communities and social life.

## Management Objectives

- Prevent loss of life, personal injury and socio-economic disruption.
- Provide protection for communities/infrastructure and minimize the need for community evacuations.
- Enable the ecological role of fire as an agent of disturbance for maintenance of ecosystems and critical habitat.

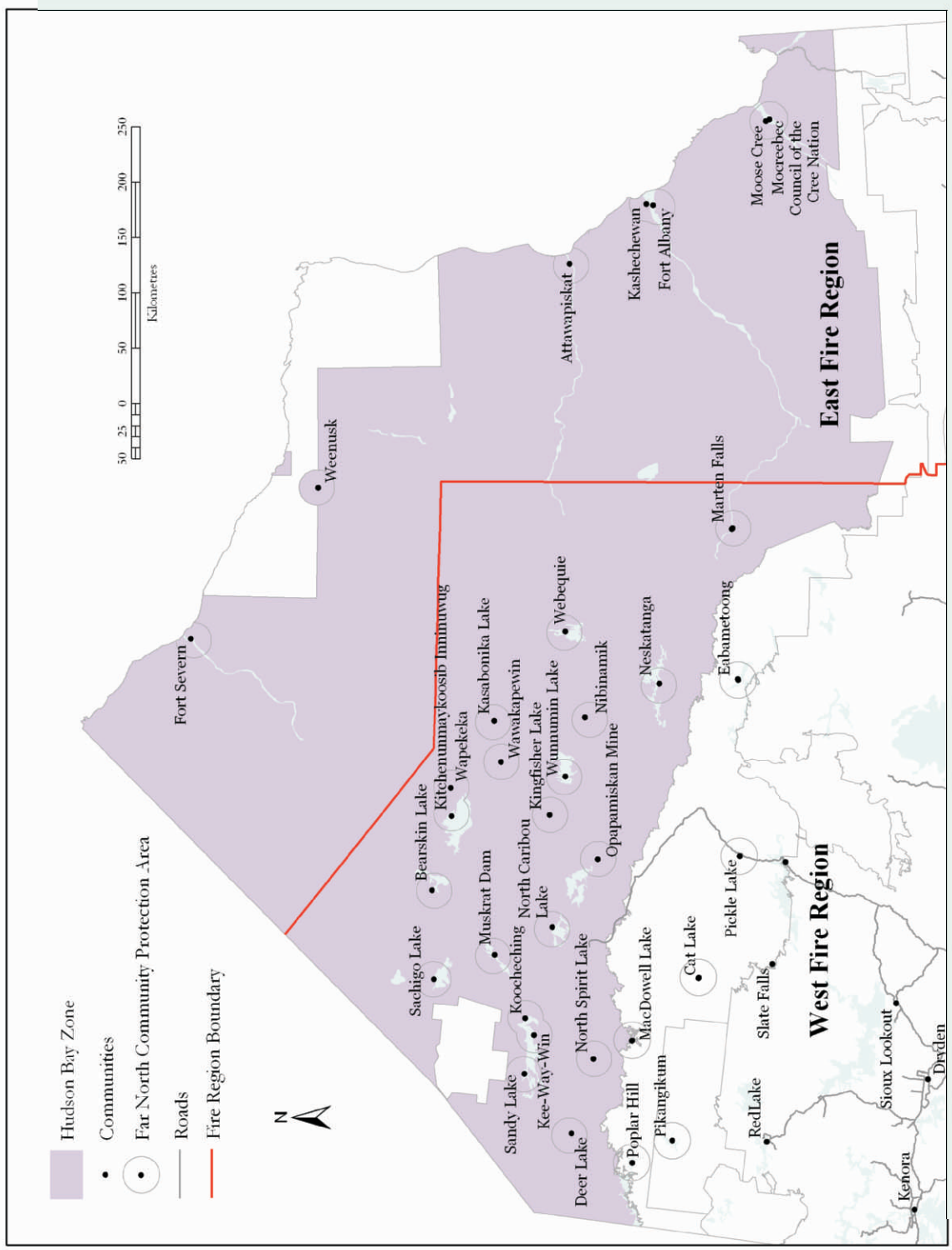



Figure 12 - Hudson Bay Zone

## Table 7 - Hudson Bay Zone Performance Measures

| Performance Measure | Measure Description | Target |
|---|---|---|
| Fire Response | Initial Action (Full, Modified and Monitored Response)<br>Sustained Action (Full, Modified and Monitored Response)<br>Response Time | 90% of fires successfully attacked<br>90% achievement of approved Fire Assessment Report (FAR)*<br>Response within program capacity |
| Area Burned (based on a ten year rolling average) | Ecosystem Renewal | 50,000 - 125,000 hectares per year |

** These policies and guidelines will be updated during the first year of the new strategy and reporting of these measures will begin in the second year of the new strategy.*

## Management Direction

- All fires will be prioritized and receive a response commensurate with values at risk and availability of suppression resources.
- All fires within a community will receive a Full Response and sustained action until extinguished.
- Fires occurring in the Community Protection Area surrounding far north communities that are expected to negatively impact the community, cause social disruption and threaten values will receive an appropriate response based on the initial fire report. A Fire Assessment Report (FAR) must be approved for sustained action.
- Fires that do not pose a threat to the community, and ***are not*** expected to negatively impact values and/or cause social disruption will receive a Monitored Response until conditions change.
- Fires in the remainder of the Hudson Bay Zone will receive a monitored response commensurate with values at risk and program capacity.
- Designated islands or large wetland areas identified by resource managers in fire operations plans may be considered for Modified or Monitored Response.
- Fire suppression resources will be positioned within this Zone according to the anticipated fire load.
- Prescribed burning will not be used in this Zone.