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Today's Canadian boreal peatland forestry

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In 1995, an extensive and comprehensive review of the ecology and principles of peatland forestry was published (Paavilainen & Päivänen 1995). At that time, Northern Europe countries were attaining the maturity in their management approach concerning forested peatlands, aiming their interest towards a sustainable maintenance of drained areas. In Canada, at the same time, peatland forestry was gaining in popularity and great success of certain silvicultural treatments, such as drainage, was expected in many provinces where vast forested peatlands could be found.

Today, Canadian forested peatland management is not what it was expected to become 15 years ago. Black spruce and Scots pine behaving very differently, peatland forestry inspired from Northern Europe expertise had to be adapted, or even sometimes proven inappropriate to our situation. Many factors have influenced the faith of forestry in Canada, consequently forcing the evolution of laws, regulations, guidelines and silvicultural approaches. In many provinces, major changes occurred; it is generally more difficult to act in forested peatlands without considering the fragile and easily disturbed hydrological cycle of these ecosystems and the consequence it can have on stream water quality. The way forested peatland management is done now in the boreal region of Canada will be described and compared to what was expected 15 years ago.