

NAME _____ DATE _____

Forest sustainability may be defined as managing forests to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It is often seen as a balance between society’s demands on forests and the need to conserve forest health and diversity.

Traditional Perspectives

For Indigenous peoples of North America, the concept of sustainability, known as the Seventh Generation Principle, is based on an ancient philosophy that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world as far as seven generations into the future. It is represented in the “Seventh Generation Principle” graphic, on the right.* In considering the long-term effects of actions affecting natural resources, this philosophy helps to ensure both sustainability and stewardship.

Triple Bottom Line

Many people use a “triple bottom line” approach to measure sustainability by looking at three elements: economy, environment, and society. One way to think of those three elements is shown in Figure 2. Each of the elements—economic prosperity, environmental protection, and social well-being—is interdependent with the others, and each may be present to a greater or lesser degree in a particular situation. The ultimate goal of forest sustainability involves a balance of all three, as indicated by the shaded area in the middle. The essential idea of forest sustainability is that environmental, social, and economic issues and ideals must be included in decisions and actions that affect forests, while also taking into account future and present needs.

FIGURE 2. triple bottom line approach to sustainability

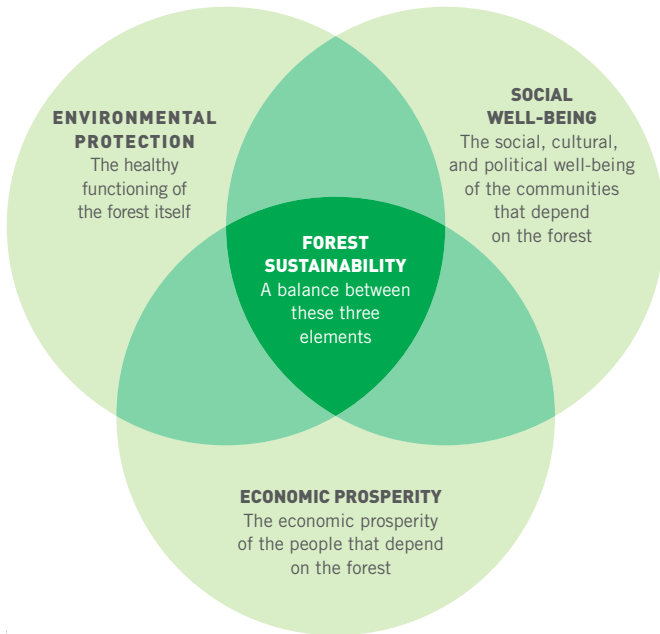
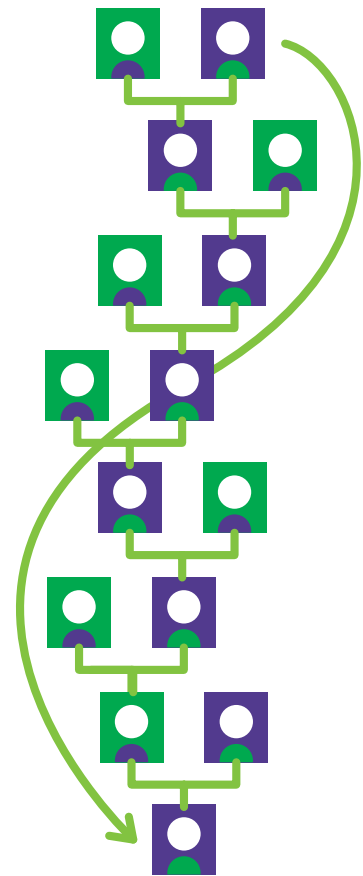


Figure 1. Seventh Generation Principle of Sustainability



*Source: “What is the Seventh Generation Principle?” www.ictinc.ca/blog/seventh-generation-principle

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