



Community Forests: Growing Prosperity At Home

Small communities in Nova Scotia know they can no longer depend solely on large multinational companies to provide jobs and opportunities in the forestry sector. They know we can do better.

By allowing local communities to manage community forests on Crown land across Nova Scotia, the province will ensure that our forests are well-managed, and that there are jobs and opportunities for families close to home.

"There is a real opportunity to develop a healthier forest while protecting the livelihood of families and communities. That is exactly what the community forest model will accomplish." — Premier Darrell Dexter

Controlling Our Own Resources

British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec have all had community forest models in place for 15 years or more. There are 125 community forests in Canada, mostly in those three provinces.

Generally, these provincial governments have signed agreements with community groups to manage their local forests. The community groups then sign licence agreements with businesses that want to harvest trees or pursue other business ventures. Some revenue stays close to home, and can be used to fund the groups' activities or community priorities.

Groups that manage community forests also pursue their own goals – starting businesses related to forestry, creating ecotourism opportunities and offering education programs. The possibilities are limitless. For example, the Geraldton Community Forest in Ontario has a contract to provide firefighting services in Ontario forests; offers forest firefighter training; and operates a geographic information services business called GEOMA.

Local management ensures that the people who rely most on our forests are the ones who benefit from them. They ensure that harvesting is done responsibly; that there are opportunities for recreation, eco-tourism and business; and that the forests create jobs and opportunities close to home.

Moving Forward, Together

The Community Forests Expression of Interest, announced Dec. 10, 2012, will allow interested community groups and businesses to organize and express their interest in managing community forests. Initially, the province plans to explore the concept with interested groups in Southwest Nova Scotia. For more information, visit www.novascotia.ca/natr.

The province is also exploring opportunities for a Mi'kmaq forest initiative with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs.

Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaq communities have long been advocates of community forests. We will work collaboratively with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs to ensure that interested Mi'kmaq groups and entrepreneurs have opportunities to be involved in forest initiatives.

Examples of community forests:

The Harrop-Procter Community Forest:
www.hpcommunityforest.org

The Geraldton Community Forest:
www.gcfi.net