



Coalition for Sustainable Forests of Newfoundland & Labrador

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Sustainable Use is: The use of an organism, ecosystem or other renewable resource at a rate within its capacity for renewal (IUCN-International Union for Conservation of Nature).

Environmental sustainability relates to: Actions undertaken to ensure that they do not inhibit the long-term health, vitality and biodiversity of an ecosystem. We do this by moderating our needs and desires in order to accommodate the environmental limitations (IUN-International Union of Nature).

Coordinator's Note

Dear Fellow CSFnl Members:

The Coalition for Sustainable Forests of Newfoundland and Labrador was launched on January 21, 2009 by a group of citizens concerned with the health of our forest ecosystems, and the lack of a planning system that is integrating all the needs of our forest landscape. In order to provide clear direction to assist Government in implementing a Sustainable Forest Management Strategy, the mission of CSFnl is to assist citizens in clearly defining and contributing to the successful implementation of ecosystem-based planning in forest management in Newfoundland and Labrador. In other words, we need to integrate all the diverse needs of the forests to support healthy wildlife populations, endangered species, tourism, as well as fibre for timber industry.

The interim objectives of the coalition are:

- Re-define forest management to fit within the objectives and needs of over-arching land use plans that are ecologically-based, and aimed at community sustainability.
- Contribute to the development of a template for applying ecosystem-based planning to forest management in the province.
- Help create clear links between 5-year forest management district plans and ecological management objectives in the province.
- Contribute to the development of 5-year forest management district plans that are consistent with the 2003 sustainable forest management strategy of NL.

Actions underway included several press releases particularly highlighting the goals and objectives of CSFnl, and the inaugural public meeting that took place at the Gathering Place (Centre for Ecology and Justice) in St. John's on

January 21, 2009. Concerned citizens, industry workers and Environmental Non-Government Organizations provided a cornucopia of ideas and thoughts, and want to be involved in sustaining our forests.

There is concern all across Canada for protecting our boreal forests as they are rapidly being demolished. The boreal forest has witnessed a devastating reduction of 70% over the past century. It is essential for communities to take responsibility for sustainable forest management and ecosystem-based planning in order to protect and enhance biodiversity that will support local economies. Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) national campaign aims to protect 50% of Canada's boreal forest. Our forests are critically important in curbing climate change, they provide habitat for many iconic species, such as woodland caribou that are rapidly declining. Forests filter millions of litres of water daily, providing oxygen, storing carbon (sequestering), and contributing to high quality spawning habitats to species like salmon.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can empower their communities to actively lead by example in the sustainable management of our forest landscapes. With the internationally acclaimed release of an ecosystem-based forestry management plans in Labrador, the recently the expropriation of the Abitibi holdings in central Newfoundland, and the positive experiences of community-based forest management elsewhere in Canada, communities can fully take control over what is rightfully theirs.

The Coalition for Sustainable Forests of Newfoundland and Labrador is about ensuring a high quality forest landscape as a legacy for our children.

Ian Goudie, Ph.D.
Coordinator

The failing forest district planning process in Newfoundland

Recently the Forest Industry Sector Strategy Report by Halifax Global Inc. identified that “All stakeholders on all sides of the issues are unhappy with the current approach to management of the island’s forest land base and forest resources”, and that “without significant change in the policy approach to these issues, the conflicting demands and disagreements can only increase”. Halifax Global Inc. noted that many stakeholders believe their ability to influence public policy decision related to forest management is constrained, and community interest groups with a local focus do not have a say in how nearby forest resources are managed. Proper land use planning and community control are important recommendations of this report. The forest district planning process was originally conceived, as a means to engage public contribution toward the development of 5-Year forest cutting plans that must be registered for environmental approval under the Environmental Protection Act. But because the forestry division controls and limits the planning process, most informed professionals, public and interest groups have disengaged from that process. Groups, such as the Atlantic Salmon Federation and the Protected Areas Association, have turned to the Environmental Assessment Process to voice their concerns but seemingly this process is merely rubber-stamping these plans. In contrast, the Government’s 2003 ‘Sustainable Forest Management Strategy’ implied it was evolving into ecosystem-based planning for our forest resources with public reviews by 2004. Clearly they have not delivered and it is the mandate of the CSFnl to help usher in a land use planning system for Newfoundland and Labrador that is ecologically sustainable. By this we mean that it is taking into full consideration other resources, such as salmon, caribou, lichens endangered species, and tourism that also depend on the forest landscape. The following articles recently appeared in the Western Star newspaper of Corner Brook, and reflect the legacy of a government not following its stated policy for sustainable forest management:

Assessment system needs to be fixed

STEPHENVILLE

ROBERT DIAMOND

The Western Star

An article in Saturday’s issue of *The Western Star* regarding Corner Brook Pulp and Paper’s harvesting plans has the natural resources and environment minister quoted as saying the onus is on people to get more involved when it comes to voicing their concerns about the province’s environmental

assessment process. Conservation Minister Charlene Johnson said the environmental process is not a mere rubber stamp for major projects such as the mill’s harvesting plan and that there are public consultations prior to the plan’s submission and a 30-day period after the undertaking has been registered for further public input. I say that the onus is on the minister and the provincial government to create a democratic, land-use planning process which is not loaded in favour of industrial forestry interests which is the case with the existent district forest planning process and the related public consultations to which the minister refers. This public consultation is in fact mostly about rubber stamping and facilitating the paper company’s harvesting plans. A democratic, non-biased land use planning process might help in reaching the goal of environmental assessment to strike a balance between sustainability and the various values people attach to the land.

Update forest management

ST. JOHN’S

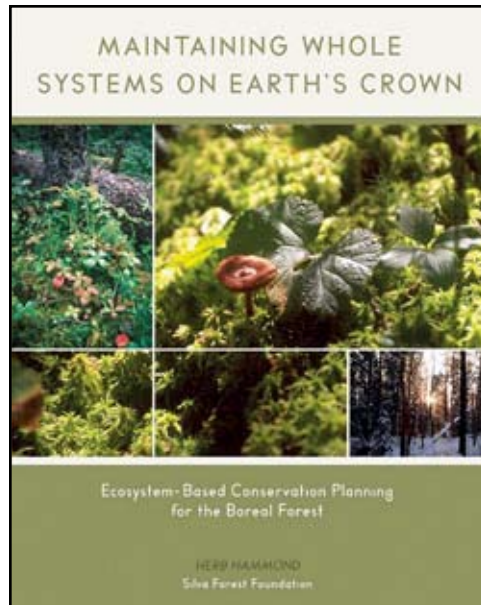
IAN GOUDIE

The Western Star

Russell Wangersky has brought important attention to yet another layer of incompetence in how our government is managing our forest resources (Saturday, Feb. 14). Groups such as the Atlantic Salmon Federation and many others are seriously disillusioned by the forest district planning process and have largely disengaged. Because the resulting five-year plans are subsequently submitted to the Department of Environment and Conservation for public review and approval under the Environmental Assessment Act, many of us have looked to this avenue to attempt to evolve the badly needed changes into our forest management system. The rubber stamping of the District 14/15 five-year forest management plans means there will be no integration of important resource needs that include public view-scapes, protection of old growth forest habitats for woodland caribou and marten, and adequate buffering of our precious salmon rivers, to name a few. Instead, our government has railroaded another 1.7 million cubic metres clear-cut into the backyards of Newfoundlanders from Burgeo to Gros Morne National Park. This sad day in the continued saga of desecration of the natural environment of Newfoundland continues the plague of a government more intent on propping up a failing forest industry sector than on evolving the diversification and ecosystem-based planning that is necessary to move forest management into the new millennium.

Forest planner to launch new book in Newfoundland

Forest scientist Herb Hammond will be launching his new book 'Maintaining Whole Systems on Earth's Crown: Ecosystem-based Conservation Planning for the Boreal Forest' in Corner Brook at Greenwood Suites at 7:30 PM on April 23, and St. John's at the Fluvarium at 7:30 PM on April 24, 2009. Herb Hammond, whose popular writings include 'Not Seeing the Forest for the Trees' was critical in leading the development of a ecosystem-based 5-Year Forest Management Plan for District 19 (Goose Bay, Labrador) that has received international acclaim (see www.innu.ca). The plan makes clear the diametric opposite approach needed to achieve forest planning that is ecologically sustainable because it starts with identification of what we need to leave on the landscape before deciding what we can harvest (Fig. 1). This important precedent in land use planning in the province was made possible through the insistence of the Innu Nation in Labrador, and demonstrates that an integrated approach to forest management is possible in this province. A very important outcome in District 19 was that the original Annual Allowable Cut (AAC) had to be reduced by 40-50% in order to protect watersheds, provide connective tracts of forest on the landscape and assure habitat for rare and at-risk species. In reality the AAC in most, if not all, of our 5-Year District Forest Management Plans would



need to be considerably reduced in order to achieve management objectives for critical resource needs such as sustaining productive salmon spawning habitats, high quality view-scapes (e.g. salmon river valleys), old growth forests for caribou, connectivity of the landscape and endangered species. Other jurisdictions in Canada are well progressed with the ecological approach to land use planning.

"A growing body of science that has evaluated human modification of forests for timber extraction casts many serious doubts on the sustainability of the worldwide approach to forestry that is characterized by clear-cutting, tree plantations, and short cycles of

tree cropping. Around the world, this approach has resulted in degradation of soil and water, loss of plant and animal species, and questionable long-term economic benefits to forest-based communities." - Herb Hammond

"Ecologically sustainable use of ecosystems is a necessity for our survival, indeed the survival of Earth as we know it. However ... short-term economic agendas continue to be put ahead of maintaining ecological integrity and long-term community well being. ... the ecological footprint of many economic developments continues to exceed reasonable ecological limits." - Herb Hammond

Coalition meets with assistant deputy minister of natural resources

On April 23, the CSFnl met with ADM of the Department of Natural Resources to update the department on the recently launched coalition and its primary mission. He made clear that DNR believes its forest district planning process is very effective and exemplary of engaging public participation in forest management. In his opinion, the process is working notwithstanding that some individuals or groups may oppose or feel frustrated by this approach.

The meeting resulted in little positive outcome toward evolving a new ecological-based approach to land use planning, and was difficult to reconcile in light of the recent Forest Sector Strategy Review to Government discussed above. CSFnl discussed its plan to develop a series of public meeting across insular Newfoundland, and expressed its hope that DNR would contribute funding to this grassroots effort.

Process to develop ecosystem-based conservation plans



Major Goals:

- Protecting ecosystem functioning at all scales through time
- Establishing diverse ecologically sustainable community-based economies



Ben Hansen photo

5-Year caribou strategy seeks to address declining populations in Newfoundland

The Minister of Environment and Conservation, the Honourable Charlene Johnson announced \$15.3 million in funding for a five-year scientific and management strategy of the island woodland caribou populations to better understand and mitigate the current decline in woodland caribou numbers and the role of predators in this decline. From an estimated peak of over 90,000 caribou in 1996, the current population is estimated at 37,000, representing a decrease of approximately 60 per cent. Part of this effort will be directed toward reducing predator numbers, such as the black bear, coyote and lynx, through legal harvests. Predators are considered the major factors associated with this decline of caribou populations.

The CSFnl and the Newfoundland and Labrador Outfitters Association (NLOA) and others are very concerned that this science and management strategy is failing to consider the integral role of habitat in maintaining healthy caribou numbers. Caribou are declining rapidly in most of their boreal range, and it is directly related to the loss of boreal habitats. This iconic species relies on old-growth lichen-rich forests at critical periods of its annual life cycle, and these are rapidly being depleted through clear-cutting and silvicultural activities that reduce landscape biodiversity. Experiences on the Avalon that witnessed the population crash of caribou there, and the rapid loss of balsam fir and deciduous cover on the landscape to over-browsing by the introduced moose are among reasons to reconsider what the landscape carrying capacity is for caribou and moose populations. High rates of predation and disease (parasites) are, more often than not, indicators of over-populating numbers.

Community Forestry Programs: what are they?

Community Forestry Programs are heralding the new way to forest management because they reap social, ecological, and economic benefits directly to local communities.

The benefits include:

- Local control over and the enjoyment of benefits offered by local forest resources.
- Local employment and economic development.
- Ecological, cultural, spiritual, and recreational aspects and benefits.
- Long-term community stewardship resulting in increased self-reliance of rural communities, increased potential to resolve conflicts over timber harvesting in watersheds, education and research (Gunter; Ambux 2006).

Community forests secure land tenure, such as long-term leases, and assure sufficiently large land bases to generate annual allowable cuts that are ecologically sustainable. Residents directly participate in decisions regarding how much timber to harvest, and integrate other needs of the forest ecosystem, as well as focusing on non-timber resources, such as medicinal herbs, wild mushrooms, berries, etc.

The steps taken to implement a community forest include:

- Developing community support
- Forming partnerships
- Research and investigation of areas
- Proposal development
- Licence negotiation
- Initial development

Generally a facilitator is appointed who has necessary expertise and leadership qualities to help integrate expectations and contributions of a planning team. A key factor is the forest land base as the process must take in consideration the forest development, history of the area, land productivity, land constraints, habitat issues, and access (Gonna; Gunter 2006).

Source: The Community Forest Guidebook: Tools and Techniques for Communities in British Columbia

Land-use planning and community forestry in province

Land-use planning is a comprehensive long-term resource plan, completed through a community roundtable process. Starting with a blank sheet of paper, and ending with a complete plan including environmental, social, and economic needs addressed for a particular area. It is associated with ecosystem-based landscape management with an integrated approach and a protected areas network, along with a socio-economic basis. An example locally is Forest District 19 in Labrador, which is an ecosystem-based plan facilitated by Silva Forest Foundation using landscape-level ecological principles. Ecosystem-based management is grounded on the principle that forest-based cultures, communities, industries and activities ultimately depend upon healthy ecosystems. Community Forest Networks (CFN) focus more on adjacency in harvest planning and community-based resource management as stewards of the resource. It has been defined as a public forest area managed by the community for the benefit of the community whereby members of a community(s) are empowered in managing the adjacent forest, and obtaining long-term benefits from it. CFN increase the degree of community control over forest management, and the sharing of benefits while maintaining long-term sustainability of the forest ecosystem and the socioeconomic relationships to it. Models of community forestry include:

- Municipal-type organizations with their own land base that involve municipalities, conservation authorities, and counties. There are few tenure restrictions and the decision-making rests with the community council(s).

- Municipal-type organizations with Crown allocation where the administrative structure also involves crown land with limited property rights, and tenure restrictions.
- Forest management organizations created specifically to manage forests that include non-profits, corporations, and cooperatives. These often involve an elected board made up of community representatives, and Crown land, tenure restrictions, and management objectives vary.

There are currently over a 100 CFN in Canada run by community organizations on public land, and they are concentrated in Ontario, British Columbia, and Quebec. Community Forest Programs are important because adjacency is imperative for the sustainable development of all of our resources, and for our rural communities in order to balance extraction with value-added products. CFN help correct imbalances related to ownership and long-term leases of forest landbase historically controlled by large corporations. The public of Newfoundland and Labrador need to achieve direct leadership of their forest management and the CFN are the way of tomorrow. Model Forest NL is currently exploring pilot programs for insular Newfoundland. For more information visit:

<http://www.mfnl/>
<http://www.communityforest.ca>
<http://www.hpcommunityforest.org/>
<http://www.communityforest.ca>
<http://www.dufferinmuseum.com/forest/>
<http://www.silvafor.org/>

CSFnl launched in NL after first meeting in St. John's

The CSFnl held its first meeting January 21, 2009 at the Gathering Place on Military Road that received an excellent response from people all concerned with maintaining sustainable forests in Newfoundland & Labrador. They included NGOs, industry workers, citizens, and more people who couldn't be there but support the CSFnl. Issues up for discussion was how Newfoundland doesn't have a land-use planning process which is something that is essential for sustainable forests to be successful. Another surprising factor was that Newfoundland has 18 forest districts that all have different harvesting plans which are all reviewed separately under the Environmental Assessment Act; therefore it is necessary to make an over-arching planning template.

Everyone at the meeting agreed that we have to get the public's attention on this matter so that they can contribute to community-based planning and help promote, and be involved in, local sustainable forest practices. Maintaining our forests helps support a healthy diversified locally-based economy. Ms. Susan Squires presented the topic of Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) which are economic alternatives to timber extraction and include such as mushrooms, Christmas wreaths, cancer-treating extractions, and plenty more. There are plans in the near future to hold meetings across the province in communities such as Corner Brook, Grand Falls-Windsor, Plum Point, Bonavista Bay, and St. John's.