



## Coalition for Sustainable Forests of Newfoundland & Labrador

# Coordinator's note

Dear Fellow CSFnl Members:

The **Coalition for Sustainable Forests of Newfoundland and Labrador** is committed to evolving the planning systems that affect our forest ecosystems. Our first year of activities has been very busy with strategy meetings, appeals of ministerial decisions on forest district plans and much media coverage. The NL Chapter of CPAWS was successful in continuing some funding for Kurtis McIntyre as a Forest Issues Coordinator and Fangfang Guo as an Assistant Coordinator who completed a review of the state of ecosystem-based planning in Canada. This report will soon be ready for distribution, and if you are interested in copies please contact Kurtis.

The Department's 'Provincial Sustainable Forest Management Strategy (2003)' states the following:

*"Ecosystem-based guidelines will be developed for each ecoregion in the province ... creating a link between district plans and ecological management objectives ..."*

*"The Department ... will prepare the ecosystem-based guidelines through consultation with regional planners, district managers, Headquarters Division, Fish and Wildlife Division, non-governmental organizations and forestry industry representatives. These guidelines will be drafted by December 31, 2004. There will be a public review of the new sustainable forest management planning guidelines."*

These critically important guidelines are still not prepared, nearly seven years later and close to the next round of 5-year forest district planning. Without these there is little or no template against which the 5-Year plans can be developed. Ecosystem-based, and particularly sustainable management, means different things to

different people. The CSFnl have requested that the Minister of Environment, responsible for the *Environmental Protection Act* establish a *Class Assessment* of forest management in Newfoundland and Labrador as defined in section 18 of the *Environmental Assessment Regulations*. Such an action would re-establish public confidence in the government's commitment to sustainable forestry, and garner academic and professional involvement in developing state-of-the-art protocols for sustainable forestry in this province.

This would generate the ecosystem-based template necessary for the next generation of forest management plans. This is seemingly a tall order for a government with little or no environmental track record.

The Department of Natural Resources remains the major stumbling block in attempting to evolve ecosystem-based planning into the forest management system. Einstein's Dictum notes that problems cannot be solved within the mindset that created them, and this certainly seems applicable here. Exemplifying the continuation of old patterns, DNR solicited Expressions Of Interest for 280,000 m<sup>3</sup> of timber in the former Abitibi holdings in central Newfoundland in May 2009. On Jan 12, 2010, they announced initiation of the Forests Management District planning sessions for these districts. Such tactics pre-empt the ability to initiate an ecosystem-based approach that should be determining what to leave before planning what to take.

We live in Hope!  
*Ian Goudie*  
Coordinator

## The Coalition for Sustainable Forests Corner Brook Retreat

The Coalition for Sustainable Forest of Newfoundland and Labrador (CSFnl) held its second retreat at Grenfell College in Corner Brook, NL on September 25-27, 2009. The CSFnl established on January 21, 2009 under the coordination of Dr. Ian Goudie and launched under NL Chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS\_NL). The group represents Environmental Non-Government Groups, concerned public and volunteers from across the province dedicated to the sustainability of Newfoundland and Labrador's forests.

The Purpose of this retreat was to overview past meetings, and build on the outputs by refining a clear vision statement,

and working on the objectives and goals for the future. A number of key speakers presented, including a keynote presentation by Larry Innes, Executive Director of the Canadian Boreal Forest initiative entitled "Developing an Ecosystem-Based Forest Management Plan in Central Labrador: Experiences and Issues." Other key speakers were Dr. Ian Goudie, John Baird and Ian Warkentin.

The vision statement was refined as:

"To build a broad consensus among Newfoundlanders and

*please see "Corner Brook" page 2*



**Clear-cut and landslides in the Hughes Brook.**



**Watershed participants view damage to riparian area.**

# Corner Brook retreat

*from page 1*

Labradoreans so that ecosystem-based conservation planning and management becomes a fundamental part of our culture and government policy.”

The CSFnl is emphasising ecosystem-based management (EBM) by using the definition of Herb Hammond 2009: Maintaining Whole Systems on Earth’s Crown which is a method of protection, maintenance, restoration, and human use that, as the first priority, maintains or restores natural ecological integrity - including biological diversity - across the full range of spatial (from very large to very small areas) and temporal (from short to long periods of time) scales. At the same time, it provides for ecologically and culturally sustainable communities and their economies. Ecosystem-based conservation planning provides a picture of the ecological framework that is necessary to protect biodiversity, and the ecological limits within which human uses need to be carried out, in order to be sustainable.

The CSFnl developed specific goals and action plans for the near future, and assigned members different tasks to achieve these goals. The retreat was a great success in helping the coalition move forward toward bringing ecosystem-based management to the forefront of culture and government policy. There are plans for future meetings in Grand Falls-Windsor and Clarenville with a symposium in St. John’s.

During the last day of the retreat, Don Ivany of the Atlantic Salmon Federation led a tour of the forestry operations ongoing in the Hughes Brook area. The tour was an eye opener. Participants witnessed some of the real problems in that area related clear-cutting and forest access road construction under the guise of ‘sustainable management’ that need to be addressed. The unsuccessful appeal of release of this management plan from environmental assessment earlier this year was discussed. The forestry operations are negatively affecting the salmon spawning habitats in the area through

siltation as well as eliminating old growth forests important to indicator species, such as woodland caribou habitat. Other noticeable impacts included small landslides, and the rapid proliferation of introduced invasive alien plant species among. The large-scale clear-cuts evidenced at Hughes Brook highlight a pattern evident across the island that is promoted by mechanical harvesting and industry agendas. Harvesting that is ecologically sustainable mimics natural disturbance regimes that are much smaller in scale for these balsam fir forests.

Some objectives the Coalition for Sustainable Forests developed include:

- Re-define forest management to fit within the objectives and needs of community-based planning and development, i.e. local ownership.

- To encourage and contribute to the development of ecosystem-based guidelines for each eco region in the province.

- 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 district plans and ecological management objectives in the province.

- Contribute to the development of 5-year forest district plans that are consistent with the sustainable forest management strategy of the province and principles of sustainable forest management as defined by the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (1992) criteria framework.

With your help the CSFnl can help evolve the necessary changes in our approach to landscape conservation and management. If you have any questions, ideas or concerns or would just like to get involved with the Coalition for Sustainable Forests of Newfoundland and Labrador please feel free to contact our forest issues coordinator Kurtis McIntyre at 726-5800 Monday through Friday 9-5 or by email [nlforest@cpaws.org](mailto:nlforest@cpaws.org).

# Preserve the natural integrity of the “Tickles” at Roddickton

In recent years, a concerned citizens group entitled ‘Save The Tickles Committee’ formed in the Roddickton area of northern Newfoundland. Proposed clear-cutting and forest access road construction threatens another unique natural area in Newfoundland known as the ‘Tickles’. Nestled under the Chimney Hills of the Long Range Mountains, and overlooking the mighty Cloud River, this area is located on the northern peninsula inland from the Ocean approximately 10 kilometres via Chimney Bay, and it is west of the town of Roddickton. Indicated on the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) map is the Operating Area Number D18-51 - Horsechops Commercial Harvesting Area that is slated for commercial harvesting and road construction throughout the Cloud River ‘Tickles’ area. Currently, there is a five-year forest-operating plan set forth by the District 18 manager of the provincial Department of Natural Resources office in Roddickton to harvest a considerable portion of this pristine habitat and construct forest access roads.

Much of the ‘Tickles’ is nestled in wetlands and old growth balsam fir forests that would inevitably be severely damaged or destroyed by commercial harvesting and road construction. In addition, much of the dense forest near North West River and Crooked Brook is located on sloped terrain and clear-cutting would cause depletion of topsoil and nutrients essential for new growth. Clear-cutting of these slopes would cause sedimentation to accumulate in the surrounding bodies of water effecting fish and critical spawning habitats. Current required buffers of only 20 m are insufficient to protect sensitive salmon spawning habitats. The construction of forest access roads along with cutting old growth trees would negatively affect the already troubled woodland caribou of this area and the concerned citizens committee fear “the Tickles caribou herd” would be lost forever. Sustainability of such important resources far outweigh the short term benefits due to forest harvesting that can surely be diverted elsewhere.

The majority of the area has pristine delicate estuarine waters, and is an inland sea where the Northwest River, Cloud River and Crooked Brook come to merge with the At-



**Bald Eagle catching fish.**



**Woodland caribou wintering at Cloud River Tickles, Newfoundland.**

lantic Ocean water in an extensive series of inlets and coves. When fresh and salt water mix, an environment is created that holds an abundance of life-giving nutrients that make it an ideal place for an incredible mixture of species, making the ecosystem extremely rich in biological diversity. Speaking of biodiversity, the ‘Tickles’ is home to some of the most abundant wildlife on the island and more importantly some of the more rare species on the island. Some of the species that call the ‘Tickles’ home include an abundance of migratory birds and waterfowl (notably Black Ducks), Bald Eagles, Osprey, Goshawks, Great horned Owl, Belted Kingfisher, woodland caribou, moose, black bear, lynx, fox, seals, otters, weasel, mink, beaver, muskrat, snowshoe hare, arctic cod, arctic char, Atlantic salmon, sea trout, brook trout, and a diversity of insects as well as a multitude of plant species including salt marsh cord grass which is considered rare on the island. Few of these resources have been adequately inventoried in this area.

In addition to supporting wildlife, the ‘Tickles’ could complement recreational fishing, boating and tourism in this area. Estuaries such as this are important to our quality of life and our health for reasons other than employment, healthy economies, and recreational opportunities. The ‘Tickles’ serves as a focal point for community life and many traditions of the local people. The area protects water quality and has potential as a centre for research and education. Residents, boaters, naturalists, mountain climbers, campers, anglers, berry and mushroom pickers also come to this paradise called the ‘Tickles’ to relax, soak up mother nature and see an area that is relatively untouched by mankind. In short it is part of the cultural experience of this geographic area of northern Newfoundland.

The ‘Tickles’ area was identified under a habitat protection plan signed between Environment Canada and the Government of Newfoundland (September 11, 1987) and is considered under the wetland stewardship program of the province. Also, the ‘Tickles’ area has been proposed as a natural area dating back to 1982 and again in 1995-96 under the protected areas system plan. Surely the value of the ‘Tickles’ as a natural area far exceeds any short-term profit realized destroying its natural beauty and ecological integrity. Time is running out for this pristine habitat with pressure being added by the construction of a wood-pellet plant in the area. Its not to late, we need to rally together to form a stronger voice and spread the word about what is happening to another one of our unique, pristine environments on our spectacular Island.

Please voice your opinion and join us in our quest to get help from the Minister of Environment and Conservation Charlene Johnson and Minister of Natural Resources Kathy Dunderdale to take action and preserve the ‘Tickles’ as a natural area for our children’s children. If you have any comments or feedback please feel free to contact our forest issues coordinator Kurtis McIntyre at [nlforest@cpaws.org](mailto:nlforest@cpaws.org) 726-5800, or write to the minister Charlene Johnson at [charlenejohnson@gov.nl.ca](mailto:charlenejohnson@gov.nl.ca) or 729-2543 or 729-2574, or Kathy Dunderdale at [kathy-dunderdale@gov.nl.ca](mailto:kathy-dunderdale@gov.nl.ca) or 729-2920.

# The future for forests and communities on the Eastport peninsula of Newfoundland

Mark and Fraser Carpenter

As the debate over the future of forests on the Eastport Peninsula moved toward the discussion of management options, our company shared its years of international experience in order to improve the local decision making process. Thus far, there has been great rhetoric on the subject of sustainable management (Government of NL 2003: Sustainable Forest Management Strategy) but very little tangible progress. Yet what happens to our forests today determines their sustainability for our children's children. It is our view that the way we have been managing our forests is no longer good enough. In our area, we can walk through the country while contemplating that from this area came the timber to build schooners and churches, run saw mills, send cargos of birch junks and hoop poles to St. John's and load steamers with ties and pit props for Europe. It's gone - overharvested. If we are going to be able to sustain our local communities, we are going to have to change our relationship with our forest.

## COMMUNITY FORESTS - THE INTERNAL ECONOMY

In indigenous land claims settlements around the world, there is another kind of accounting taking place; one that recognizes the internal economy of people and importance of 'place'. Sustainability of place is much more complex than seasonal jobs, and measures wealth by how much labour stays in the community. This requires a long-term commitment to the inclusive landscape and seascape, and less focus on exports. For example, the Eastport Peninsula in Newfoundland today still derives its viability in large measure from the same indigenous resource base that attracted the original European inhabitants. Using the accounting of governments and industry (GDP), community life should, in theory, not have been sustainable on the peninsula, with its marginal fishery, impoverished soils and sub-arctic, coastal

forest. But the peninsula has remained stable and modestly prosperous by intuitively creating economic solutions from a complex mix of forestry, fishing, farming and tourism.

The Eastport Peninsula today is enjoying a modest construction boom but, for the first time in history, the majority of the lumber is coming from off the peninsula, and most of it from outside Newfoundland. Construction wages are, by Canadian standards, rock bottom. The carpenter who once augmented those wages by cutting firewood for the local market and logs for next season's work is having to take a serious look at leaving the area and finding better pay. What has held the skilled workers in the local community in the past is the subsidy provided by access to forest products, not competitive wages that are beyond the economy of the peninsula to sustain. This demonstrates the complexity of the feedback loops from forest to community. How to ascribe a dollar value to this economy is irrelevant - it has existed since time out of mind. But once a tipping point is reached, that is, once for a hundred ill-defined reasons the economic quality of life is no longer viable for enough families, the community dies.

We stress the importance of a study of the role of the forest in the internal economy of a forest management district as a prerequisite for any forest management planning. This is important because many of our rural communities supported sustainable forestry operations for many generations; hence, this history is the key to understanding what works and what does not work.

## MANAGED FORESTS - THE NEW OPPORTUNITY

Today there is an opportunity to rally around the threat of commercial logging and create for ourselves community-based model forests that allow us to sustainably and profitably manage our forest for generations to come. This isn't about losing short-term jobs that might have come out of a five-year har-

vesting plan - rather, it is about creating long-term jobs and opportunities in a forest managed for sustainable local use. It's time to stop watching our forest trucked down the road to feed distant mills and markets, and empower the internal economy of our local community areas with fuel, logs and opportunity for micro businesses. What is exported are value-added products manufactured and extracted by small-scale entrepreneurs who, as is always the case, make the least demand of the resource for the highest return at the community and family level.

To make this happen, we need to coalesce around the concept of sustainable management and draw upon outside expertise willing and able to help us. In this day and age, communities willing to embrace sustainable management are preserving outpost traditions and forests in the face of big government and big business and their rapacious designs. But to make this happen, we will have to take on the mantle of managers and the rhetoric of sustainability. It is our hope to help evolve such a paradigm shift.

For more, please see the full article in *The Osprey*: 40(2), Journal of the Natural History Society of NL, Spring 2009.



***Newfoundland has surely lost a wise elder.***



**Mark Carpenter  
1950 - 2009**