




New  Nouveau
Brunswick
C A N A D A



The New Brunswick Public Forest

Our Shared Future

Natural Resources

JUNE 2005

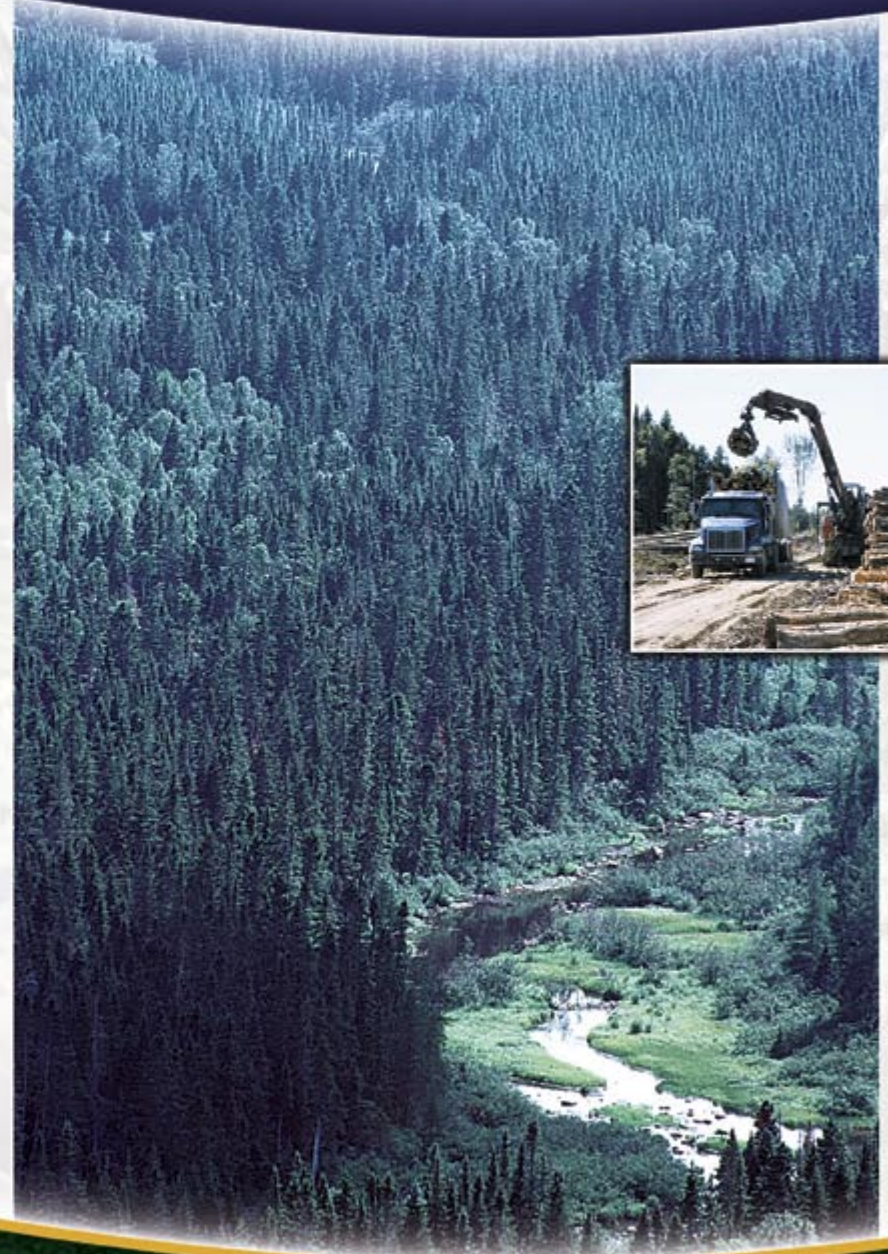
FOREWORD

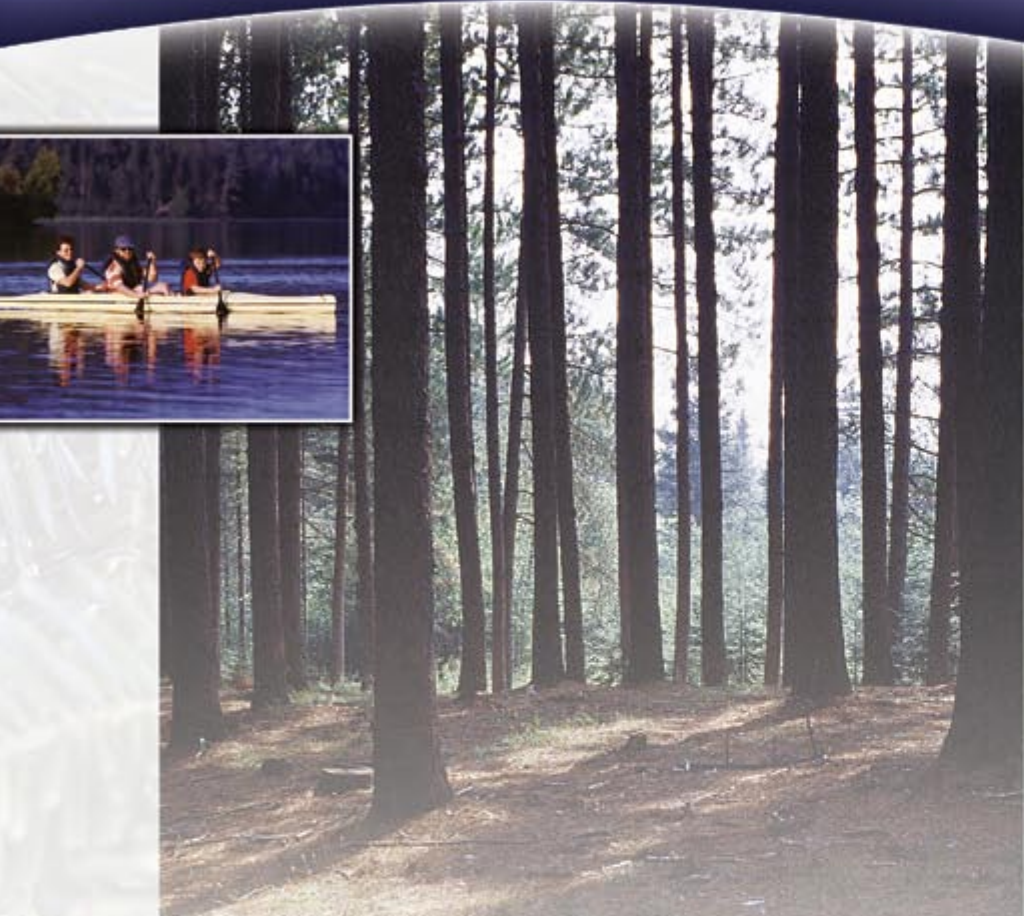
The Government of New Brunswick recognizes the importance of the forest to its citizens. New Brunswickers made it clear, through public hearings of the Select Committee on Wood Supply, they want a healthy, multi-use public (Crown) forest. They are committed to a forest that will maintain ecological processes and be sustainable over infinite forest life cycles.

New Brunswick residents also want a vibrant forest industry that will sustain their jobs and communities.


New Brunswickers want to have a greater say in how the public forest is managed. The Department of Natural Resources is the steward of the public forest and is also responsible for providing opportunities for public participation.

Government acknowledges through its stewardship that these goals will be attained.





OUR VISION

 Our public forest will be managed sustainably to provide the greatest possible environmental, social and economic benefits for New Brunswickers.

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INTRODUCTION

New Brunswickers have spent a lot of time, over the past three years, discussing the future of the province's public forest. The Select Committee on Wood Supply held public meetings in November and December 2003. They heard presentations from over 200 people and received an additional 200 briefs and letters from individuals and stakeholders. Values and desired benefits from the public (Crown) forest were examined and the Committee made recommendations based on what they heard from the participants in this public process.

After thoroughly examining these recommendations, government has developed a direction for the future management of the public forest. This document defines the philosophy, principles and direction that will be followed in the management of that forest. It has been prepared by the Department of Natural Resources and informs the public about the management of New Brunswick's public forest. This document also provides the basis for requirements for Licensee management plans as defined in: *Objectives and Standards for the New Brunswick Crown Forest for the Period 2007-2012* (June, 2005).



FOREST MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Approximately half of New Brunswick's land, roughly 3.4 million hectares, is public land. It is under the administration of the Minister of Natural Resources. The New Brunswick *Crown Lands and Forests Act* divides the public forest into Timber Licenses. Each License is managed by one of the larger forest-based companies in the Province. Each Licensee has specific obligations and responsibilities under the Act. Licensees are required to develop, and periodically revise, 25-year Management Plans. The first Management Plans were prepared in 1982 and have been revised every five years since.



The Minister of Natural Resources is responsible for the development, utilization, protection and integrated management of the resources on public land. The Department's mission is to manage the natural resources of the Province in the best interest of its citizens. This requires the establishment of goals and objectives that must be met for the duration of the management plan.



The challenge is to establish an appropriate balance among competing objectives that will benefit all New Brunswickers. This requires an understanding of all of the impacts associated with objective-setting decisions. It is also important to recognize that needs change over time. That is why public land objectives are reviewed every five years.

Under the *Crown Lands and Forests Act*, the Minister is responsible for setting forest management goals, objectives and standards. Licensees are responsible for developing and implementing Forest Management Plans that meet them. Sound forest management planning is key to any sustainable forest management system and, in New Brunswick's case, to maintaining a healthy, diverse and productive forest.



THE DNR-LICENSEE RELATIONSHIP

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sets public land forest management goals and standards and evaluates licensee performance.

Licensees manage the License in accordance with DNR established goals and standards and report on forest management activities.

Department of Natural Resources responsibility

- Establish comprehensive forest management goals for timber, biodiversity, wildlife habitat and water quality
- Set maximum limits on the annual allowable cut (AAC) for all tree species
- Set environmental standards for forestry harvest operations
- Establish silviculture standards and funding levels
- Monitor forest management activities
- Set performance criteria on which licensees will be evaluated and conduct a comprehensive evaluation every five years



Licensee responsibility

- Develop and carry out management and operating plans in accordance with the goals and standards established by the Minister
- Build forest roads and install water-crossings in accordance with government approved standards
- Fulfill silviculture commitments in accordance with government direction
- Maintain independent, third-party sustainable forest management standard
- Report on forest management activities annually



OUR VISION

Our public forest will be managed sustainably to provide the greatest possible environmental, social and economic benefits for New Brunswickers.

This Vision will be achieved through directed actions at several levels:

- Public participation
- Forest diversity
- Wood supply
- Wildlife habitat
- Watercourses and wetlands
- Building knowledge
- Resource protection
- Third-party certification



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Crown lands and resources are publicly-owned assets. It is important for the public to understand the basis for management decisions. It is also important that stakeholders understand that Government decisions affecting public land involve consideration of a broad range of economic, environmental and social factors.

As recommended by the Select Committee, three levels of participation will be offered to citizens of New Brunswick: a formal public participation process to be implemented in conjunction with the 2009 Forest Vision document; establishment of a Provincial Forest Advisory Committee; and enhanced Licensee Stakeholder Committees.

Government acknowledges its responsibility to include the integration of recognized Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in natural resource management. The Department will consult with Aboriginal communities to ensure their rights and interests are accommodated.

On the ground, DNR ensures high quality management of the public forest by inspecting operations and evaluating performance of Licensees. DNR will enhance its efforts of reporting on Licensee performance by also reporting on the performance of operators. The Minister of Natural Resources will also make an annual State of the Forest Report to the Legislature. As well, an action plan will be developed and implemented to improve public awareness of forestry and forest management.



FOREST DIVERSITY

Sustainable forest management recognizes a forest's potential to sustain a range of values. It also provides a framework to achieve the best balance of uses, based on the benefits and impacts of management alternatives over the long term. The inherent diversity of our forests provides a wide variety of commercial forest products (timber and non-timber), as well as other important economic, ecological and social functions (e.g., recreation, wildlife, clean air, clean water and wilderness).

It is the goal of government to maintain the natural diversity and ecological characteristics of the Acadian Forest to support the needs of New Brunswick now and in the future. At the landscape level, specific vegetation communities unique to the Acadian Forest have been identified and will be maintained. In addition, New Brunswick established a network of Protected Natural Areas in 2002. Using the New Brunswick ecological land classification system and input from citizens, government set aside 146,000 hectares as Protected Natural Areas. For the 2007 management plan, government will enhance the existing network by establishing and protecting an additional 5,000 hectares of fine filter sites. These sites ensure that portions of the Province will be left with little human disturbance. They will help maintain ecological integrity and biological diversity and serve as benchmarks that represent the Province's natural landscape.

To further enhance diversity and sustain the Acadian Forest, non-clearcut harvest prescriptions will be required for stands of quality tolerant hardwood, red and white pine, red spruce and cedar, in the 2007-2012 management plans. Harvest practices that favour natural regeneration and species diversity will also be used and forest management activities will be directed to ensure the full range of naturally occurring forest types and successional stages are maintained.

WOOD SUPPLY

The New Brunswick forest must be managed by looking at the greater global economy and world environment. Beyond the ecological benefits of healthy forests, the government must also work for the greatest economic returns from the forest. Specific wood supply objectives, combined with productivity goals, are integral to the economic sustainability of the forest sector and the Province.

Starting in 2005, the Department will initiate a process to develop quantifiable wood supply objectives for all commercial tree species. The results from this analysis will provide long-term direction for forest management in the Province.

The goal for 2007 management plans is to maintain the provincial softwood annual allowable cut at the 2002 level. At the same time, the Department acknowledges that non-timber objectives will continue to be important. If revised vegetation community and wetland

buffer objectives negatively impact harvest levels, adjustment of some objectives may be required.

To further support the management objectives, silvicultural activities of planting, spacing and stand-tending will be implemented. Economic opportunities for the harvesting of non-timber forest products will also be explored. To ensure access to world markets, all harvest operators on public land will be required to meet independent, third-party sustainable management certification standards.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

Government's goal is to provide the habitat necessary to support populations of native wildlife species at desired levels across their natural ranges.

Quantitative habitat objectives will be developed and included in forest management plans for selected wildlife species or species groups. Forest management activities will provide the amount, quality and distribution of identified habitats to meet population objectives for all native vertebrate species and the habitat of species at risk will be protected.



WATERCOURSES AND WETLANDS

It is the goal of government to protect water quality and maintain aquatic habitat for fish and wildlife species.

To achieve this, buffer zones will be maintained around wetlands, lakes and other watercourses. Operations will conform to requirements of the *Clean Water Act*, including standards for the design and construction of roads and the installation of bridges and culverts.

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

Forest practices must be based on a sound understanding of ecological principles and the management goals established for the forest. Applying the best science and technology will ensure the continued health of New Brunswick's forest. A more knowledge-centered, innovation-based approach to forest management must be embraced, including raw material utilization and value-added strategies. All New Brunswick agencies that contribute to these efforts must work collaboratively through partnerships and networks.

RESOURCE PROTECTION

The Department of Natural Resource's mandate to manage public land includes an expectation to protect the land from inappropriate use and degradation as well as to protect our natural resources from theft, fire, insect and disease. The Department will strengthen its efforts in these areas.



THIRD-PARTY CERTIFICATION

Increasing demand for forest products and other forest benefits, together with widespread public concern over the management of limited forest resources, are leading the global forest community to pursue the benefits of sustainable forest management certification. Forest management certification requires third-party auditing of forest management activities against a sustainable forest management standard. Certification is one of many tools used to improve forest management practices.

All Licensee and Sub-Licensee operations on public land must be certified to a sustainable forest management standard. New Brunswick was the first jurisdiction in North America to make this a requirement of Licensees and Sub-Licensees. All Licensees and Sub-Licensees operating on public land met this obligation by March, 2005.

OUR SHARED FUTURE

The Department of Natural Resources is committed to sustainable development, ecological sustainability and the conservation of biodiversity. The strategic directions in this document support a healthier New Brunswick, a higher quality of life, a more vibrant economy and stronger communities.

There are many challenges that impact our ability to successfully protect and manage our natural resources. However, with our considerable strengths to build on, the New Brunswick government is committed to moving forward to meet those challenges. Government will work to promote healthy, sustainable ecosystems, protect significant natural areas, conserve biodiversity, ensure water protection and facilitate economic opportunities in the resource sector.

