

## What is Community Forestry?

Community forestry is conducted by local people to benefit local people. It is characterized by local control in decision making, and forestry for the economic independence of the community.

Community Forestry is made up of three major components:

### Rebuilding our Economies

1) Community Economic Development: Community forestry contributes to local economic stability. Wealth generated from use of the forest tend to stay in the community rather than leaving New Brunswick to pay distant shareholders. As money remains in the locality, potential exists for diversification into more refined wood products. Community forestry also prevents “shifting forestry” and the boom bust and cycle experienced by many forest dependent communities. Relatively constant levels of forestry activity in a community decreases economic dependence on provincial and federal governments.

### Sustaining our Forest Ecosystems

2) Sustainable Forestry: As local communities are dependent on forests for economic, ecological and recreational needs, true incentives exists to manage for sustainability. If forest ecosystems are degraded local people must live with the consequences. For this reason, community forestry usually results in smaller scale, ecologically benign forestry practices. At the level it is often easier to manage for a wide range of values, including the maintenance of wildlife habitat, watersheds, soils and recreation.

### Community Management

3) Community Participation: Now, there is a growing public demand for meaningful participation in resource management decision making. Both CLURE (1993) and The Premier’s Round Table on Environment and Economy argued that citizen participation is a crucial ingredient in the achievement of sustainability. Community forestry is based on the notion that important resource decisions should be made by those who are directly effected by the consequences of those decisions. Community forests involve a wide range of forestry groups, and provide open channels for public involvement on forest issues. This results in a democratization of the forest sector.

All three components of community forestry are intimately related and influence each other. By gaining economic self-sufficiency, a community opens the door to political self-reliance. By sustaining all aspects of the forests, the community protects itself and its natural environment from negative ecological and economic change. Healthy forest ecosystems are the foundation of vibrant N.B. economies.

## Why Community Forestry?

Working community forest across Canada, and around the world, have shown that a wide range of benefits are possible:

- \* greater economic benefits
- \* economic diversification
- \* consistent levels of local employment
- \* wildlife conservation
- \* habitat protection
- \* educational and research opportunities
- \* aid in flood and erosion control
- \* scenic and aesthetic benefits
- \* stabilization of the local water supply
- \* recreational / eco-tourism opportunities
- \* enhancement of local quality of life

## How Would Community Forestry Work in New Brunswick?

Structure: Community forests are usually governed by elected groups which represent the diverse forest interests in a community. Board members co-operatively make forest management decisions with the help of a general manager and a technical staff.

### Community Forest Boards

Wood cutters and mill workers Woodlot Owners Recreational groups Environmentalists/ Naturalists  
First Nations Representatives Municipal representatives Economic Development Corp. Industry representatives  
Provincial DNR

Forest Size: To conduct a successful timber business from a community forest, forest areas must be in the range of 1000 to 10 000 hectares. Geraldton Community covers 65 400 hectares of forested Crown land surrounding the town

of Geraldton, Ontario. Mission, B.C., has a Provincial Tree Farm Licence which entitles the municipality to 9200 hectares. However, the importance of size is dependent upon the management goals of a particular community forest. For example, a community which emphasizes educational or recreational benefits of the forest rather than timber production might find a smaller land base adequate.

Land Tenure: Community forestry is possible on a variety of tenure types. A municipality may own extensive tracts of forested land. North Cowichan, B.C. has been conducting forestry operations on 5 000 hectares of municipal land since 1980. Several communities have gained access to provincial Crown land. Mission, B.C., and several of the communities involved in Ontario's Community Forestry Pilot Project have long term forest leases with provincial governments. Other communities have made arrangements with private industry by which they are granted certain rights to forested land. Finally, trusts are co-operative also offer potential for community access to forests.

#### Summary

Community forestry is a flexible concept, which can take on a variety of forms depending upon local needs and resources. Models range from those which involve complete community control over forest management decisions, to co-management initiatives. While a community forest is managed first and foremost to benefit the local community, local activities must fit with regional and provincial planning goals for forest stewardship.

... interesting facts and quotes ...

“ Only a dynamic and flexible local economy rooted in diversified enterprise will provide communities with a stable economic base and their citizens with hope in this period of fundamental change.” (Kathy Sanderson, Dir. Provincial Affairs, Canadian Federation of Independent Business).

“ ... tying a community's health directly to the health of the forest may act as a very potent strategy for ensuring stewardship of the resource base” (Stephen Harey, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 1994)

“ Sustainability is a matter of responsible, informed behaviour by individuals and groups. This kind of behaviour is likely only when people feel that they have a degree of involvement, that they are enfranchised” (N.B. Round Table on the Environment and Economy 1991)

“ Employment: In 1993/4 Eel Ground First Nations employed 17 full time, year round silvicultural workers. W.I.K.Y Community Forest, in Ontario, created up to 50 seasonal and full time jobs.”.

“ Throughout the public consultations, there was the general feeling that the benefits from Crown lands should be more available to rural residents and should contribute more to the development of rural communities” (Commision on Land Use and the Rural Environment 1993)

#### Project's Objectives and Perspectives

##### COMMUNITY FOREST

##### Objectives:

- Cease immediately mechanical harvester operations on Crownland within five miles of rural communities having high unemployment rate for forest workers.
- Allow Crown land access to small operators under direct stumpage license with the province.
- Impose a two year moratorium and study the impact of lost employment and opportunities in rural communities.
- Have a Crown Woodlot License Program in rural communities.
- Community Forestry based ideas that reflect sustainability for the community and the province. Co-ordinate forest activities so different groups of wood workers could benefit from the use of natural resources. Silviculture workers could get additional revenues by collecting branches for the wreath makers.

**Jean Guy Comeau, Chairperson**