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Conservation Council of New Brunswick

Premier's Decision on New Forest Rules Betrays New Brunswickers' Future

The New Brunswick government's new forest management strategy betrays New Brunswick's future according to the Conservation Council's Executive Director David Coon. "With the government's decision, logging in our public forest will destroy even more wildlife habitat," said Coon, a member of the Task Force on Forest Diversity and Wood Supply. "The area of forest managed for wildlife will be reduced by at least half to allow industry to keep cutting at current levels," said Coon.

"New Brunswickers have repeatedly told our government they want to change the way forestry is conducted in our public forest to save animal populations decimated by overcutting, to stop the damage to our rivers and lakes, and to diversify our forest-based economy, but Premier Graham has chosen more of the same," said Tracy Glynn, the Conservation Council's Acadian Forest Campaigner.

Scientists say that for forestry to be ecologically sustainable, plantations should not exceed more than 15% of the forest area and the area of old forest should not fall below 40% to avoid local extinctions.

The government strategy will increase the plantation area to 28% and slash old forest area to 31%. A number of forest species are already in trouble and the government strategy announced today further jeopardizes their survival in our Acadian forest. For example:

* Population of oven birds, a member of the warbler family, has plummeted by 50% in southern New Brunswick as its habitat shrinks.

* Twenty species of birds, from warblers to woodpeckers, are either declining or at risk of declining as their mixed wood and hardwood habitats continues to be harvested.

The Task Force on Forest Diversity and Wood Supply provided the provincial government with three different options to save animals from local extinction and help the forest to adapt to climate change. These options have been rejected.

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