B a c k g r o u n d e r # 1

Another World is Possible:

A Vision for Ecosystem-Based Forestry in New Brunswick

CONTEXT

The New Brunswick Government jointly commissioned a report with the New Brunswick Forest Products Association promoting a vision of industrial forestry for New Brunswick(Jaakko Poyry, 2003). This is only one of the directions that the people of New Brunswick can go in terms of management of the crownlands. Despite industry rhetoric that "there is no alternative" to the global economy, there are many people in New Brunswick are successfully practicing ecological forestry (Spence, 2003) that provides a greater range and diversity of benefits to local communities (Sierra Club, 2003). This is the vision that New Brunswick needs to look towards for the future. The government needs to commission a report that builds on this vision.

PRINCIPLES

1. Focus on what to leave, not on what to take. An ecosystem-based approach leaves fully functioning ecosystems at all spatial scales through time. Biological diversity is protected, including genetic, species, community, landscape, and regional diversity.

2. Recognize the hierarchical relationship between ecosystems, cultures, and economies. Economies are part of human cultures, and human cultures are part of ecosystems. Therefore, protecting ecosystem functioning provides for healthy human cultures, and the economies that are part of these cultures.

3. The precautionary principle to all plans and activities. The precautionary principle deals with uncertainties by directing that decisions, interpretations, plans and activities must err on the side of protecting ecosystem functioning, as opposed to erring on the side of protecting resource exploitation. In other words, if you are not sure that an activity will protect, maintain, or restore ecosystem functioning, do not do it.

4. Ensure that the planning process is inclusive of the range of values and interests.

5. Protect, maintain, and restore ecological connectivity by establishing large reserves, linkages, and an interconnected network of smaller reserves throughout all areas of the landscape. This is particularly important in areas that are likely to be altered due to human settlement and economic activity.

6. Provide for diverse, ecologically sustainable, community-based economies. To be sustainable and provide for social equity, economies need to facilitate a diverse range of activities that focus on fulfilling individual and community needs, and on protecting and maintaining natural capital. Healthy communities both depend upon, and sustain, healthy and diverse ecosystems.

(Adapted from Silva Forest Foundation)

CASE STUDIES

Eel Ground Forestry Program and Straight Arrow Specialized Lumber Products:

In addition to specialized lumber, the company makes finished lawn furniture, cedar chests, gun racks, fencing, and just about anything else made out of value-added lumber. These items are displayed in front of the sawmill and are quickly purchased because the prices are far less than other retail outlets. Straight Arrow Specialized Lumber Products and the Eel

Ground Forestry Program currently have 20 full-time employees, and have seen as many as 45 people employed during peak periods of operation

The Canadian Eco-lumber Co-op: www.ecolumber.ca

The co-operative was formed to carry products that are independently eco-certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), or are reclaimed from buildings slated for demolition. The members are practitioners (community forests, woodlot managers, small-scale sawmills, furniture and cabinet makers, and other value added wood processors) and advocates (including many of the best-known and most effective environmental organizations).

Harrop Proctor Community Forest: www.hpcommunityforest.org

The Harrop Proctor community initiative has developed a sustainable forest project that benefits the local community on 11,000 hectares in British Columbia. The community has a thriving forest botanicals business and sells certified forest products. They are currently focusing on the value added and recently produced certified Harry Potter broom handles at the request of author JK Rowling!

REFERENCES

Jaakko Poyry Consulting (2003). New *Brunswick Crown Forests*: Assessment of Stewardship and Management. New York

Sierra Club (2003). *From Dependence to Diversity*. Sustainable Forests, Sustainable Communities. http://64.141.103.135/bc/publications/communities/pamph_5_2002.pdf

Spence, Mark (2003). *Survival Strategies for the Small Woodlot Forest*. Elements Online Magazine. http://www.elements.nb.ca/theme/sustainableforestry/marc/spence.htm