

**Every-Person's Guide to the Options for Managing New Brunswick's Public Forest
Proposed by the Task Force on Forest Diversity and Wood Supply
Conservation Council of New Brunswick**

Context

On September 14, 2001 the pulp and paper companies licensed to log New Brunswick's public forest lands wrote to the Minister of Natural Resources. The company executives said the government "must" revise its public policies regarding New Brunswick's public forest to allow the companies to double their annual cut of spruce and fir by 2050, and demanded that they be compensated if their super-sized wood supply was compromised in any way.

In 2002, the lobby group for the forest products' companies, the New Brunswick Forest Products Association, commissioned the multinational consulting firm Jaakko Poyry to look at how these demands might be achieved.

Jaakko Poyry concluded that the annual cut of spruce and fir could be doubled by 2065 if there was a prohibition on any further measures to protect our water, wildlife, habitat, or biodiversity. Further, for this scheme to succeed, the current cap on plantation establishment would have to be removed so that 40 percent of the public forest could be replaced by plantations. In the short-term it suggested the government permit more cutting in water buffers and habitat zones.

In late 2003 and early 2004 an all party Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly held public hearings throughout New Brunswick. It heard considerable public concern over the status quo approach to forest management and significant opposition to the Jaakko Poyry recommendations.

The Select Committee made 24 recommendations based on the public input it received. These included recommendations to reduce the amount of clearcutting, maintain the natural diversity of New Brunswick's public forest, manage for more commercial trees species than spruce and balsam fir, and assign wood allocations to communities when mills close.

The Select Committee acknowledged that the forest is a complex biological system which operates on a long-term ecological timescale, so management objectives must address public values and be biologically sound consistent with the best understanding of how the forest functions. And it highlighted the importance on public land of maintaining flexibility to respond to changing markets, science and social values - the antithesis of the approach demanded by the pulp and paper companies operating mills in New Brunswick.

Report of the Task Force on Forest Diversity and Wood Supply

In the summer of 2005, the Minister of Natural Resources Keith Ashfield established a Task Force on Forest Diversity and Wood Supply to propose a number of options for changing the way the public forest is managed to reflect the recommendations of the Select Committee. In particular, the Minister was seeking management strategies which would effectively maintain the diversity and character of New Brunswick's Acadian forest while managing for a wider variety of species.

Task Force Members:

Thom Erdle - Chair, University of New Brunswick

Blake Brunson, NB Forest Products Association

Roberta Clowater, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (New Brunswick Chapter)

David Coon, Conservation Council of New Brunswick

Derek MacFarlane, Natural Resources Canada, Canadian Forest Service

Claude Pelletier, Madawaska Forest Products Marketing Board

Doug Prosser, Wood Products Group

Roger Roy, Université du Moncton B Edmundston

On August 27, 2008 the Task Force's report, "*Management Alternatives for New Brunswick's Public Forest*" was publicly released. It presents seven different options for forest management whose consequences for our forest are forecast over 100 years. The consequences of these options are compared to each other and with the impacts of the current approach to forest management.

CIBC World Markets/ Woodbridge Report

In the face of changing markets for forest products, the collapse in U.S. demand for lumber and consolidation in the industry, half the forestry jobs in New Brunswick have disappeared since 2000. Four of the 10 pulp and paper mills operating in the province have permanently closed as has an Oriented Strand Board (OSB) mill and a significant number of sawmills. The closed mills were consuming roughly one third of wood permitted to be cut from the public forest and were responsible for managing 1.46 million hectares of Crown land, representing 45% of New Brunswick's public forest.

In January 2008, Premier Shawn Graham commissioned a report from Don Roberts of CIBC World Markets and Peter Woodbridge to recommend what existing and emerging markets are likely to shape the future of the forest industry in New Brunswick, and suggest measures that could be taken to enhance its competitiveness.

"*Future Opportunities for the Forest Products Industry in New Brunswick*", a summary of the CIBC/Woodbridge Report was released along with the Forest Task Force Report on August 27, 2008. The full report will not be made public.

Public Views on Forest Management in New Brunswick: Report from a Provincial Survey

A government commissioned survey of public attitudes toward forest management on public lands was carried out in 2007 by researchers at the University of New Brunswick and the Canadian Forest Service. The survey results suggest that:

1. New Brunswickers believe the most important role of our public forest is to protect water, air and soil. The second most important role is to provide a place for animals and plant life. To provide a source of economic wealth and jobs is ranked third, followed by recreation in fourth place.
2. There is widespread dissatisfaction with current forest management practices.
3. A majority of people believe that too much timber is being cut, and this view is even more common place in communities whose economies are dependent on forestry.
4. A majority of New Brunswickers feel that the forestry industry has too much control over forest management in the province.
5. More than half believe that maintaining wood supply for industry at current levels should not be a priority.
6. More than 80% believe that a major goal of forest management should be to protect water quality.
7. The top four groups that people believe should be involved with the management of our public forest are environmental groups, local communities, woodlot owners, and an agency managed by the provincial government.

The Question?

Which of the options presented by the Task Force on Forest Diversity Wood Supply for managing our public forest most closely reflects public priorities? The option chosen by the Department of Natural Resources will change the nature of the forest management plans that will guide forestry practices in the public forest beginning in 2012.

How Will New Brunswickers Be Consulted?

New Brunswickers will be invited to inform the Department of Natural Resources of their favourite forest management option by e-mail or Canada Post.

Management Options For New Brunswick's Public Forest

A. Cut less, Conserve and Stop Planting

Manage for biodiversity with an emphasis on expanding protected natural areas to fully represent forest diversity and ending the conversion of forest to plantations. Forestry practices are guided by the science-based recommendations of New Brunswick's top biologists and ecologists for conserving biological diversity.¹

B. Slow Down Fast and Prepare for Climate Change

Manage to restore the diversity of wood supply and forest ecosystems to favour tree species that will thrive in the face of climate change and discourages those that will decline. Maximize the forest's ability to store carbon. Forest practices are guided by the science-based recommendations for conserving biological diversity.²

C. The Grand Compromise

Manage for diversity but reduce the area of habitat protection zones.

D. The Status Quo with a Twist

Manage to convert a huge area of forest to plantations while taking steps in the remaining forest to save some of the diversity that will be lost if the status quo remained.

E. Clearcut, Spray and Farm the Forest for Self-Sufficiency

Manage for the Jaakko Poyry objectives recommended by the Self-Sufficiency Task Force. Double the supply of spruce and fir for 2X4s with a massive increase in plantations and herbicide spraying while shrinking wildlife habitat zones.

F. Clearcut as Little as Possible but Cut Everywhere That is Possible

Manage to satisfy diversity and timber objectives every time you cut by using as little clearcutting as possible while eliminating habitat protection zones and sticking with the status quo plans for converting forest to plantations – in a kinder, gentler way.

G. Open Season on the Best of What's Left

Manage like the status quo but eliminate the restriction on plantations so rich mixed wood Acadian forest is once again allowed to be replaced by tree plantations to produce 2X4 lumber.

¹ (Betts, M.G., and G.J. Forbes (Eds). 2005. Forest management guidelines to protect native biodiversity in the Greater Fundy Ecosystem. Greater Fundy Ecosystem Group, University of New Brunswick, 110 p.).

² Betts, M.G., and G.J. Forbes (Eds). 2005.

Key Characteristics of New Brunswick's Acadian Forest

1. A key characteristic of New Brunswick's Acadian forest is the very high diversity of forest ecosystem types found in small areas. In total, there are more than 60 different types of forest ecosystems often found in intimate mixtures across the province. It is the particular mix of soil fertility, moisture, local climatic conditions and natural disturbances that determines which of these forest ecosystems thrive in what part of the province.
2. Our forest contains a high level of species diversity relative to forests in many other parts of Canada. Some species such as black ash, cherry, butternut, beech, elm and bur oak are particularly at risk of being lost and require customized management.

The Problem: Clearcutting, herbicide spraying and plantations are transforming New Brunswick's diverse and complex Acadian forest to a more simplified, less diverse boreal-like forest. Diversity at the forest, species and genetic levels has been spiralling downward.

Key Indicators of Acadian Forest Ecosystem Health in a Time of Climate Change How Do the Management Options Rank?

Options A & B tie for most gold medals and take home the largest number of medals overall.

1. Increases in the area of forest ecosystem types dominated by unmanipulated forest.
Gold Medal: Option A; Silver Medal: Option B; Bronze Medal: Status Quo & G.
2. No more than 15% of the forest area in plantations.
Gold Medal: Option A; Silver Medal: Option B; Bronze Medal: Option C.
3. Increased forest area of uneven aged trees.
Gold Medal: Option F; Silver Medal: Options B&C; Bronze Medal: Option A.
4. At least 40% of the forest area of an older age.
Gold Medal: Option B; Silver Medal: Option A; Bronze Medal: Option F.
5. Largest area of forest consisting of long-lived shade tolerant tree species.
Gold Medal: Option B; Silver Medal: Option C; Bronze Medal: Option A.
6. Smallest area of forest consisting of black/white spruce, poplar and white birch.
Gold Medal: Option B; Silver Medal: Option A; Bronze Medal: Option C.
7. Least amount of clearcutting.
Gold Medal: Option C; Silver Medal: Option F; Bronze Medal: Option A.
8. Tonnes of carbon stored in the forest 20 years from now.
Gold Medal: Option A; Silver Medal: Option B; Bronze Medal: Option C.