

SEEING THE FOREST: Island Forest Forum 2001

Proceedings from a public Forum

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Prepared by Wendy MacDonald

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Introduction

The Island Forest Forum 2001 opened with a welcome from **Wade MacLauchlan**, President of the University of Prince Edward Island. He noted the broad representation of perspectives and experience among both the audience and the program speakers, reflecting the complexity of the topic. The Forum is dealing with forest issues in the context of changes in the economy, the development climate, technology, and the resource itself. Sustainability of the resource is becoming a key issue, and forms a core theme of the program for the day. He praised the organizers for their holistic approach to the topic, encompassing considerations of aesthetics, landscape, history, and wildlife, and wished participants a productive day.

Session One: Forest as Landscape

John Sylvester, Photographer

The session on Forest as Landscape began with a slide tape presentation by photographer John Sylvester, with images of Prince Edward Island's forests and forest wildlife. John introduced the presentation, noting that during his 19 years on the Island, he has seen the visual corridors become narrower and narrower, due to coastal development, the loss of hedgerows and farmland, and, in the past several years, the appearance of clearcuts, often highly visible on the rolling landscape. The presentation provided a visual context for the presentations and discussions of the day.

Bill Glen, Manager of Resource Inventory and Modelling at the PEI Department of Agriculture and Forestry: "Forest Trends, 1935 to 2035"

A detailed aerial survey in 1935 provides a valuable baseline against which to measure changes in the forest, while further surveys in 1967, 1980, 1990, and 2000 allow forecasting of trends.

Key points:

Forest area increased from 32% of PEI in 1935, to over 49% in 1990;

Hardwood is gaining strongly both in area and share. In 1935, hardwood stands (i.e., those with over 75% hardwood) accounted for only 6.5% of the total; by 1990, they comprised 29%. Between 1935 and 1990, softwood increased 10%, while hardwood increased 170%;

By 2035, it is expected that hardwood-dominated stands (i.e., those with over 50% hardwood) will account for two-thirds of the total, up from one-third in 1935. Natural stands of softwood will decrease sharply, while softwood plantations will account for 17% of the total forest;

With regard to species, data for 1935 is not available, but data from 1967 indicates the dominance of conifers: 59% of the forest was softwood (spruce, 39%, fir, 16%, other softwood, 4%), while 41% of the forest was hardwood (maples, 22%; other, 19%);

Species data reflect this shift, as shown in Table 1. The 1935 survey did not include species data, but subsequent surveys did, allowing this factor to be tracked. The forecast for 2035 is based on the regeneration patterns identified in past surveys, and pertains only to the natural forest, not to plantations;

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The following table summarizes some key points from several more detailed charts:

	1967	1990	2035
Spruce	39%	30%	15%
Fir	16%	14.1%	18%
Other Softwood	4%	5.3%	2%
Total Softwood	59%	49.4%	35%
Maple (red and sugar)	22%	29%	36%
Other Hardwood	19%	21.6%	29%
Total Hardwood	41%	51.6%	65%

-- The natural forest in 2035 will be dominated by red maple and balsam fir. Red maple will continue to increase steadily, while balsam fir will decline as older stands collapse, then rebound strongly;

-- Plantations are 99% conifers, primarily black and white spruce, pine and larch. They are forecast to account for 17% of the total forest by 2035, making up almost half the softwood forest.

Wendy MacDonald, Wendy MacDonald & Associates Inc .: "Learning the Hard Way? Forest Issues Past and Present"

(Note: The following presentation is drawn from a Background Paper prepared for the Forum, which in turn was based on an in-depth report, available on [the Institute of Island Studies website](#) , or in hard copy from the Institute.)

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The past two centuries have seen dramatic changes in the Island's forests and in their economic , social, technological, and environmental context, and these changes can be expected to continue. Yet, when we look at the history of forest use over that time, a clear pattern emerges of cycles, roughly half a century long, of increasing deforestation, rising concern and public action, an abatement of pressure on the forest, a retreat from action, and a slow regeneration of the forest in a different form. Can we learn from this past? Or are we destined to repeat this cycle, as we look ahead to an era where the forest in all its aspects is becoming a more important resource?

The era of forest management in PEI began in the mid-1900s. Over the following decades, increasing emphasis was placed on the development of a commercial forest resource in PEI. The comparatively ample funding of the 1970s and 1980s allowed exploration of a wider range of species, both softwood and hardwood; a wider range of techniques, including both treatments of existing forest and reforestation; and a wider range of programs and services to forest landowners than subsequently.

Conditions changed dramatically in the 1990s, a decade which can be likened to a place where three tides meet:

-- termination of federal program funding, withdrawal of some supports, and a narrowed provincial focus on softwood reforestation;

-- burgeoning market demand, resulting in rapid increases in harvesting activity, much of it softwood clearcuts -- by 1999, up fivefold from the low point of 1975, and double the average level of the 1980s; and

-- the emergence of sustainability as a theme in the late 1980s, and the increasing public concern throughout the decade over the level and nature of harvesting activity.

By the late 1990s, these forces in combination led to efforts to control the harvest, first through voluntary self-regulation, then through legislated controls. The controls met with a backlash by many forest landowners, and were significantly moderated. Currently the Province is undertaking a renewed emphasis on landowner education and services.

Looking ahead to the future, the core issues include:

-- sustainability -- defining it, measuring it, and developing appropriate policies and measures to attain it;

-- recognizing the core role of the landowner in sustaining PEI's forests, and devising more effective means of engaging the landowner in this role;

-- acknowledging and working with changing market forces, notably the increasing global demand that wood products come from sustainably managed forests; and

-- articulating a new role for government in terms of its priorities, relationships, and approaches to forest management.

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Karen Lips, Landscape Architect: "Looking at the Impact of the Forest in the Landscape Pattern -- A Visual Planning Approach"

The Island landscape is a pattern of natural and cultural forms in distinctive shapes and arrangements, and trees and forests are an important part of this pattern. The rolling hills formed by glacial action evolved into the cultural pattern of rolling fields framed by parallel hedgerows, with farm clusters nestled in wooded groves. Roads dip into the wooded hollows and open up to wide ocean views on the hilltops, traversing the deeply indented coastline of bays and inlets, across the patchwork of hedgerow-lined fields and rivers running to the sea. This pattern dates back to the Samuel Holland survey of the mid-1700s, which was intended to provide farms with road and water access -- resulting in a rich mosaic with a well-developed fit between the functional and the visual. Prince Edward Island is an ideal lab for a landscape-based approach, due to its small scale and the many virtually intact 18th- and 19th-century patterns in the landscape.

This landscape is continuing to evolve, however, and in recent years is changing at a dramatic pace, through many factors. Urban workers are moving to the countryside, building homes close to the road and thus changing the landscape they are seeking to enjoy. Cottage development is a factor, with 10,000 lots subdivided on the North Shore. In the agricultural sector, field consolidation eliminated many hedgerows, and now practices such as strip cropping and contour farming, while mitigating the soil erosion impacts of larger fields, are also bringing unfamiliar forms to the landscape. The farm cluster is being affected by sheds and industrial buildings outside the cluster of barns, and the homes and trailers of sons or daughters adjacent to the farmhouse or in the front field. Rural villages are being affected by changes in their foreground view, due to development on their outskirts.

Community-based landscape planning is a way to sustain the Island's landscape. It is a process that builds on a philosophy that a growing landscape awareness and skills in visioning can empower a community and its members to visualize the consequences of change, and to work together to guide development in appropriate pathways, pooling the knowledge of community

members and of professionals. The community is assisted to look at itself in different ways through the use of tools such as census data, maps, plans and drawings, *Meachams 1880 Atlas*, aerial photos and obliques, the Geographic Information System, onsite interviews and surveys, and viewscape analysis.

Landscape impact analysis is a particularly important technique for community-based landscape planning. A picture of the present landscape is created through the use of the above tools; then the future is projected, based on current trends and assuming conventional development approaches; and then new, alternative scenarios are tested. Many opportunities exist to mitigate the landscape impacts of development and to protect viewscales through creative use of forest cover, hedgerows, and clustering of cottages and new rural homes; through preservation of hedgerows and traditional farm clusters; and through appropriate policies with regard to development and agricultural practices.

In order for community landscape visualization projects to succeed, they require public participation, public education, and support for private land stewardship. Pilot projects are a promising way to make that come about -- projects involving conservation, enhancement of, for example, farm laneways, restoration, integration of development, or policy and guidelines development. In closing, a landscape focus helps us take a broader perspective, with a longer time horizon and a larger functional picture -- a picture that takes the focus off current issues and helps people make better decisions.

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Session Two: Forest as Habitat

Panel Chair, *Hon. Chester Gillan, Minister of Fisheries, Aquaculture, and Environment*

The Chair introduced the two panel speakers, then noted the vital role that forests play as wildlife habitat in PEI and in Canada as a whole. Two-thirds of Canada's species depend on forests -- including 60% of birds and 76% of mammals. In PEI, twenty mammalian species, three species of snakes, seven amphibian species, and eighty species of birds depend on the forest. This habitat is changing as described by earlier speakers, with many impacts. The Provincial Forests include 29,000 acres in ten parcels, 80% forested, which are managed primarily for wildlife. The province is working to add to that inventory, with a goal of 7% of the province's land under habitat stewardship. As almost 90% of the Island's land is privately owned, the participation and commitment of Islanders is essential to achieving that goal.

Ian MacQuarrie, Biologist: "The Woods are (Still) Lovely"

Despite the changes to the forest and the landscape, it is still possible to find loveliness wherever one goes. It is a paradox that a forest, despite its tranquillity, is a very busy place, full of life. The forest habitat is like a high-rise building, with varying species occupying the crown, mid-storey, and forest floor. Even clearcuts, despite their unsightliness, offer a habitat which is important to many animal species, and inherently interesting. The woods of PEI are resilient, and will return,

albeit perhaps not in the form desired by humans. Indeed, it may be that PEI will be mostly forested again in the long run, if the current model of agriculture becomes unsustainable.

Government has a significant impact on the forests, in part through regulations which may have unintended consequences. For example, recently a landowner who was approaching his legal limit of land ownership cut a stand of red oak in order to develop additional farmland. Government is a disturber of the woods -- like fire and insects.

With regard to habitat, there are concerns about the loss of valuable and interesting species, such as bears. If the public feels strongly enough on this issue, efforts can be made to reintroduce species, although such efforts are not always successful. Less concern exists with regard to plants, which have maintained diversity and lost fewer species.

Forests are poorly understood systems and their value is in the eye of the beholder. To biologists, they are carbon sinks; to loggers, an economic resource; to animals, a habitat; to both animals and humans, a source of food. They are also a spiritual resource to many -- they slow you down, ask you questions, provoke your thinking, and foster a sense of renewal.

Looking at forestry policy, one of the most significant failures is in the education system. Most Islanders do not recognize the incredible complexity of the woods. Schools do not place enough emphasis on natural history. In sum, "when a thing is everywhere, then the only way to find it is not to travel, but to love."

Bob Bancroft, Forestry and Wildlife Biologist: "Human Habitat Alterations -- Wildlife Winners and Losers"

The original forest habitat of PEI had all age classes -- a function of old giants falling to the forest floor, creating space, sunlight, and offering nutrients for new growth. Temporary larger openings were made by fire, wind, and disease. The Mi'kmaq and then the Basque fishers did little to alter this pattern; however, during the century of settlement in the 1800s, much of the forest habitat was removed -- and previously common animals like bear, lynx, and moose disappeared as well. They were the losers.

We protect wildlife with hunting seasons -- but we don't protect their habitat. Present-day habitats are a patchwork of farms, old farmland, and third- or fourth-growth trees. This fragmentation affects animal populations by isolating them. Development of wildlife corridors and riparian zones would allow genetic mixing of these species, increasing their chances of population survival, but the nature of land ownership in PEI means that such an approach would require community as well as industry efforts. Forest cutting, impoundments, and agriculture have also affected aquatic habitat, increasing the tendency toward warm water and the ensuing introduction of non-native species such as pike, pickerel, and smallmouth bass.

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The challenge is to manage the current forest for wood products **and** for a multitude of wildlife habitats, because they are interdependent as an ecosystem. Clearcutting is only one option on

many sites and remains an overused forestry tool that promotes pioneer (shade intolerant) tree species. To say that it is bad, however, is an oversimplification. The wildlife winners of clearcut habitats include juncos, mice, rabbits, northern harriers, foxes, and coyotes. Our approach on our woodlot is *a form of restoration forestry that favours the gradual successional transformation back to long-lived tree species that existed on the site 300 years ago* -- trees with more value both as wood and as wildlife habitat. Priorities include maximizing the height of the canopy; maintaining a wide variety of tree species, including some intolerant species; selective harvesting; and ensuring a number of cavity trees, and nest boxes where none exists. We are managing for resident barred owls, pileated woodpeckers, bobcats -- and firewood -- an exciting and rewarding challenge!

The detrimental impacts of clearcutting can also be moderated by leaving adequate riparian habitat along watercourses to evolve into mature forest. About three-quarters of Atlantic Canada's birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles use riparian habitats. The area of riparian habitat most heavily used by animals is within 200 metres of a watercourse; furbearers travel within 100 metres 85% of the time.

Someday, the true ecological cost of clearcutting will make the practice less fashionable. We need to promote, adopt, and use more ecologically sound cutting methods. Ending subsidies will stop skewing clearcut economics. Then shade tolerant forest, complete with some overmature stages, should once again become a common forest feature in PEI.

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Session Three: Forest as Industry

Anthony Hourihan, Manager, Georgetown Timber: "Sustainable Forests + Successful Business = Sustainable Communities"

Forests have multiple roles. They supply over 10,000 products, as well as water; they maintain air quality and climate; they purify the air and protect the soil resource; they are a setting for recreation and a habitat for wildlife; they are preserves of biodiversity, both species and genetic; and they are a source of food, fuel, and medicines worldwide.

What is sustainable forestry? To meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, by practising a land stewardship ethic that integrates forest management with the conservation of soil, air, water quality, wildlife and fish habitat, and aesthetics.

J. D. Irving (JDI) is in business to make money -- but there are a lot of other factors that have to come into consideration. JDI has developed a Sustainable Forest Management System [depicted below] for the 5.2 million acres it owns or manages.

The core of the system is the forest and stand plans, up to 100 years long. At the forest level, JDI manages for forest products (22 softwood mills, 3 hardwood mills), wildlife habitat, recreation, biodiversity, and water quality. At the stand level, the focus is on ecologically based strata. The

firm uses a computerized growth model for both natural forest and managed stands. As well, approximately 20% of the firm's forest landholdings are in Special Management Areas, where such features as habitat, rare plant species, recreation areas, historical sites, and valuable geological formations are the number one priority, rather than timber. To ensure watercourse protection, the firm uses a science-based minimum riparian buffer of 60 metres on each side of watercourses, in which only light, selective cutting is practised -- quadruple the buffer required in most provinces. JDI is working with the Fundy Model Forest to investigate the optimum buffer zone, taking into account factors such as slopes, soil conditions, and stream temperatures.

JDI also operates intensively managed plantations, most of which nowadays have a variety of species -- right in the trays as they come from the nursery. These provide maximum timber yield, in the range of 100 cords/acre, many times higher than the natural forest; allow more flexibility to leave natural woods for other uses; and provide a means to manage for gaps in natural supply. They can be multi-species and are particularly successful on old cleared land. Cutting can take place over time, with commercial thinning beginning at 25 years and repeated several times before the final harvest.

With regard to harvesting techniques, a newcomer soon learns that there are three bad things on PEI: potato farming, mechanical forest harvesters, and clearcuts. But these all have their place: the technology is changing and the province must compete in a global market. The issue of how the technology is applied is critical. Some best practices need to be put in place in PEI, with regard to roads, watercourse protection, rutting, harvesting, wood utilization, and prevention of spills. Clearcuts have a place with regard to harvests of old field spruce and fir; however, they have been an overused tool because they are simple and cheap. Selective cutting is more appropriate in red spruce and hardwood stands, while patch cuts offer another tool to promote more tolerant species. Currently, over 60% of JDI's land area is selectively harvested. The same holds for silviculture. Replanting is a good tool, but not the only one. Each site must be assessed for its suitability, whether the plants are going in right, the proper species have been chosen, and so forth.

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JDI carries out internal audits weekly of every crew on its properties, assessing product quality, work quality, compliance with procedures, sustainable use of resources, and preservation of biodiversity. Every operator understands the requirements and has been through a training course. This has been a big part of the puzzle that has been missing on PEI, although groups such as the Forest Improvement Association are working to address this. Training and education is needed on PEI; there is much scope to learn from elsewhere.

Research is becoming a major part of the business, with emphasis on biodiversity and resource management. JDI is involved in over a hundred R&D projects, and sponsors the Chair in Forest Ecosystem Management at the University of Maine. The firm also is involved in public education and public relations, through such measures as bringing the public to its woods for tours (about 30,000 a year) and listening to their concerns; ensuring all its professional foresters have training in landscape design; establishing public Advisory Groups for all its managed areas;

and investing \$4.3 million in the schools through its Forest Discovery Box for Grades 5–7, and carrying out summer courses for teachers.

The firm is placing increasing emphasis on sustainable management and certification because that is what the customer, such as Home Depot in the US, wants and that is what will keep the firm in the market in hard times. All of JDI's Canadian lands have ISO 14001 environmental certification and third party certification under the Sustainable Forest Initiative. As well, 600,000 acres in Maine are certified under the Forest Stewardship Council, which may come to the Maritime too.

JDI's business goals for its operations include:

- long-term quality wood supply;
- healthy productive ecosystems;
- a mix of managed, natural, and benchmark stands;
- long-term customer relationships;
- technology to increase efficiency;
- a highly skilled, educated workforce (an area where Prince Edward Island is lagging); and
- a high value-added, flexible product base.

On the community side, JDI is seeking increased jobs and community tax bases, diversification, recreation, service and support spin-offs, and long-term opportunity.

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Paul Smitz, Vice President, Queen's County Chapter, United Landowners of PEI

The purpose of participating in this forum is to outline why the United Landowners (UL) came into being. If PEI is to establish sustainable forestry, it must learn from the mistakes of the past. The Forum *Background*, in common with most speakers, gives too little emphasis to the fact that most of the forest land on PEI is privately owned. In the lead-up to Bill 7, there was very little involvement of woodlot owners at large. The Forest Improvement Association (FIA), while purporting to speak for landowners, fell short of representing them fully. Its members, while claiming to represent sectors, were there as individuals. There was no Contractors Association, nor was there an active Sawmillers Association. The county woodlot owner groups involved only a fraction of landowners. Therefore the FIA approach was driven by individuals.

The United Landowners have county chapters, each with a five-member elected executive, making up a 15-member provincial board. We hold open democratic meetings, and maintain communications with our members through a newsletter. The organization was founded due to

Bill 7, following a petition with over 5,000 signatures opposing the legislation. This involvement was needed to combat a planned agenda by senior officials of the Department, and the misrepresentation, collusion, and deception involved in that agenda. It must be noted that no reflection is intended on the field staff of the Department, the forest technicians, who are very skilled and helpful, an excellent resource to landowners.

Bill 7 was called a Forest Contractors' Code of Practice -- but it had very little to do with contractors; rather, it affected landowners. The UL stopped Bill 7, not once but twice, an historical event. We stopped it the first time, and were told we would be consulted. The bill was then reworked in secret, became even worse, and we had to stop it again. The Premier came to a very hostile meeting and, to his credit, he listened and he stopped the bill.

To get sustainability, however defined, landowners must be involved, and their needs must be respected. "Sustainability" cannot be directed by individuals in the Department who had, we perceived, a planned agenda to take control of our woods, to make us grow products for big business -- commercial trees, in mono species plantations, which are not healthy for wildlife, or for future generations. One official wrote in a periodical that maintaining a sustainable wood supply works best when it is under the control of one entity. But it's not landowners' responsibility to create work and profits for sawmillers and industry. Our non-commercial goals for our forests, for wildlife and diversity, for restoration of an Acadian forest, are not being met.

Education for forest landowners is also critically needed. The *1988 Forest Management Act*, an excellent piece of legislation, provided for education. But it never took place. Education has been repeatedly promised -- by Minister Hammill, by the Premier when he stopped Bill 7, and most recently by Minister Murphy. How long does it take to put on seminars, to provide information, to consult with landowners?

If we are to make progress now, we need new faces. There is no trust out there by individual landowners. They had an agenda, and they blew it, not once but twice. Now the FIA has new membership and new leadership, and it is to be hoped that integrity and democracy is being restored to the organization. The appointed Ministerial Council, however, is made up of the old FIA -- and the FIA itself still has too many old faces. Until we get rid of those attitudes and those faces, we will not move forward in a harmonious way.

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People in cities talk about "our forest." Correction -- only Crown lands are "our forest" -- and they are in no better condition than privately owned woods. Government needs to lead by example. With regard to protection of buffer and riparian zones, the UL is in agreement with most of proposed actions. In the area of landscape protection, however, we hear laments over clearcuts and the loss of vistas, and the impact on tourism. But if trees are to be left for the common good, then the public should pay for them. Otherwise landowners have a right to harvest them if they need to do so. Why should individuals carry the cost of sustaining vistas? Eighty-eight per cent of the forests are privately owned, but there are no incentives or tax breaks to support the public enjoyment of the forest. Nor is there enough respect for the private landowner or his land. People steal Christmas trees, shoot game, trespass, drive ski-doo's and dirt

bikes through the forest. The onus is on landowners to post their land, but that should not be the approach -- everyone knows that 90% of the land on PEI is privately owned. Education is needed to change those things.

In closing, if the goal is a sustainable forest, then government and industry must go to the landowners -- really go to the landowners. Their voice must be heard -- and listened to.

Bruce McCallum, President, Queen's County Woodlot Owners: "The Road Ahead -- from a Woodlot Owner's Perspective"

This talk is not going to be about the forestry wars of 1998 and 1999. That doesn't move us forward. Rather, this talk will look to a central problem today. The first part of this talk is called "The Wild Wild West." About 50 contractors are the main players in PEI's forests, and they make the key decisions. Woodlot owners are passive. While there are many good contractors, and I have great respect for them, there are far too many rogues and bandits who roam at will, seeking out their next sucker and leaving havo-- behind. As a forestry consultant and journalist, I have seen forestry elsewhere, and seen it done right -- and can say that PEI is the worst jurisdiction that I have witnessed, bar none. There are a lot of very ugly, unsustainable practices occurring in PEI. Here are some of the WMPs -- Worst Management Practices:

-- trashing a woodlot, taking only the readily merchantable wood and leaving a terrible mess, in such a state that it is difficult to reforest. Once a woodlot is highgraded, the owner can't get good contractors to come and set things right because it's not economically viable;

-- clearcutting or ignoring many stands that should be thinned;

-- cutting immature stands, some as young as 25 years, lying to landowners about the maturity and value of the stands, cutting thinned stands for studwood and never letting them make it to sawlogs, robbing the landowner of the future value of the wood -- our expensive plantations will be the next to be cut before their time, unless something is done;

-- cutting in riparian zones and cutting with no consideration to wildlife habitat or breeding seasons -- in the past, no buffers at all were left around streams or cutting sites;

-- dumping used oil on site and leaving garbage behind;

-- poor safety practices, leading to the highest workers compensation rates of any industry in PEI;

-- frequently, no liability insurance coverage, exposing forest landowners to major risks;

-- using inappropriate machines for the work, particularly when carrying out selective cutting or working in riparian zones or wet conditions -- resulting in ruts that can last for decades;

-- using heavy machinery and rutting the woods rather than using the lighter eight-wheel drive forwarders now available;

-- The most blatant WMPs involve out-and-out banditry, including shortchanging landowners by under-representing the amount of wood harvested, outright theft by crossing over boundaries, stealing roadside piles, paying for less wood than harvested, and offering prior to harvest to pay for reforestation then refusing when the bill arrives. If the landowner sues, they find that the contractor already has numerous judgments against him and no tangible assets.

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Not all forest contractors are like this -- but enough are to give the industry a bad name. We are all the victims. These practices are continuing to occur. Who will rein this in? The FIA tried with the Code of Practice -- but the Premier scuttled it. Now what? There is no Contractors Association, and the FIA can only get one contractor representative on its board. Rome is burning. Where -- and who -- is Nero?

The second part of this talk looks to the future. Given the poisoned nature of public and private forest sectors, and the lack of government and industry action to address these concerns, the Queen's County Woodlot Owners Association is taking action. The group, which meets regularly, voted in May to become a co-operative; the articles for the Sustainable Woodlot Cooperative are being taken to members in January. The co-op will continue to provide information to its members, but will also get directly involved in management, working with selected contractors, and eventually marketing, possibly through a yard where wood can be pooled -- activities similar to those undertaken by woodlot owner groups in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. We are interested in pursuing a Working Woodlot Program such as those in Nova Scotia. The group is also investigating the Conservation Management Program, which emphasizes wildlife rather than timber. We have been in touch with Nova Model Forests about creating a network of privately owned demonstration projects, and education initiatives and resources in such areas as best management practices and approaches to dealing with contractors.

The future holds many challenges:

- We hope for support from government and J. D. Irving, with regard to preparation of forest management plans and carrying out silviculture activities;
- Action is needed to root out the rogues and bandits, through licensing, and help for landowners through creation of a compensation fund for landowners whose woodlots have been degraded;
- A system of wood banking is required, to enable forest landowners in need to allow their woods to grow to maturity before harvesting;
- Reform of taxation has been a long-standing goal, although this is more pressing for non-farm woodlot owners;
- Certification is looming, and that may well cause a major crisis for all of us, including forest landowners. PEI must prepare now, if we want to sell in world markets.

Building a sustainable forest management regime will not happen overnight, but we must take meaningful steps. We do not really have a choice in this matter.

Richard Gill, Chair, Forest Improvement Association of PEI

Education and attitude are key to the future of the Island's forests. Harvest rates and mechanization have changed much faster than either education or attitude possibly could. In this generation, farming and fishing have been the sustained resource industries, and forestry has only recently become a major industry. Several things happened at the same time in the woods -- mechanization, a large area ready for harvest, and strong markets for softwood -- so it is not surprising that education and attitudes have not kept pace. It takes time for people to develop a positive attitude about the wood harvest, but this must become a priority. It is not realistic to believe that we can leave the choices in the woods to the landowners and contractors alone. The public is becoming increasingly urbanized and politicians respond to the majority opinion. As such, we as an industry must present ourselves to the public in a reasonable way.

We must stop hiding clearcuts behind a 10-metre buffer as though they were shameful. There is a time to cut the trees and a time which you miss the harvest. Many people who are offended by the appearance of a clearcut would not recognize the resource and opportunity lost when they drive by an over-mature or declining stand. The forest sector, like the farm sector, is vital to sustaining rural communities, providing income to farmers and other woodlot owners as well as to the industry, and generating tax revenues for the provincial treasury. In 2001, the forest industry will contribute over \$50 million to the economy, from which everyone benefits. The public needs to also become more aware as consumers of where the paper products they use every day come from, and the difficult choices that go with that.

The weight and responsibility of those choices will lie not only on landowners and contractors, but, in fairness, at this point it mostly does. If those who are not directly involved are to have input, then it will best come with effort being spent on education and openness. Fortunately, there are many examples from elsewhere in Canada, through the model forest program and other alliances to bring all concerned to a common table to make positive changes and progress. The FIA and the province have been working together to examine the option of a model forest for PEI.

Education and attitude are also vital for landowners and contractors. In many cases over the past few years, landowners and contractors acted quickly to respond to a financial opportunity, and in some cases little or no effort was spent on harvest options and sustainable forest choices. It is time to put a mechanism in place to ensure that the Department of Forestry, or some other body like a marketing board, is informed before the harvest begins, to ensure the opportunity to provide the woodlot owner with proper information about their woodlot, its nature and potential.

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Providing this education will be a challenge, given that the 600,000 acres of woods are in the hands of 12,000 people. But this ownership pattern may also be one of the salvations of our Island forest and its diversity. The division of our woodlands into so many hands, further divided

by roads, railbed, rights of way, and streams and wetlands makes it difficult for any huge blocks to fall into single ownership or control, or to harvest large tracts -- preserving diversity and habitat. What that means, as a small contractor and sawmiller, is that for many years to come there will be small woodlot owners and small woodlots where we make our living. That is important to me, because I and my family love rural life on PEI, we have benefited from it, and we are proud to have contributed to it by doing good work and providing good services and employment. In this regard, the guest speaker at the Department of Agriculture's 100th anniversary dinner last fall, Dr. Ekele of the University of Missouri, made some important points with passion and commitment. "We got it wrong," he told us. "We told farmers the wrong things and we all played into the hands of the corporate bottom line at the expense of the land and communities." He spoke of the depletion and loss of the soil, the effects on water quality, the depopulation of rural communities, and how big corporations had a bottom line but no citizenship. This timely message ties very well into what has happened and what is happening in the woods. We have a great opportunity here to make a difference.

There may not be agreement on many issues, such as buffer zones around cuts and along streams. But if we don't act soon to come up with reasonable middle-ground solutions, the forest will suffer, the industry will suffer, and we will all be poorer as a people. These changes in education and attitude will best be done through involvement and ownership. Involvement by as many interested parties as wish to participate. Ownership of problems and solutions from consumers, landowners, governments, and industry.

Some significant positive changes are occurring on PEI. Many contractors are doing excellent work and professionalism in the industry is present and growing in most operations. The initiation of a check-off fee some years ago was a major industry step towards funding part of the costs of replanting, and has met with good cooperation. The membership of the FIA attempts to hold open exchanges with all those who may have issues related to the forestry sector, and we have good relationships with government and sister organizations in the region. Although progress has been made, there is much to be done. It is not easy, but worthwhile things never are. In doing so, we must ensure that we involve the people who are mostly not here today: the ground-level people, skilled hardworking people who are proud of what they do. We must try to include them.

Session Four: Forest as Sustainable Resource

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Brian Sykes, General Manager, Nova Forest Alliance: "Achieving Sustainable Forest Management through Partnerships"

Brian noted that PEI is familiar ground, as he worked with Forestry Canada here for over six years during the early 1980s. In those days, there were ample resources and the challenge was to deploy them. Today, things have changed; there are more pressures on the resource and more conflicting demands. Different approaches and solutions are needed, and money is not necessarily the issue.

Nova Forest Alliance involves 458,000 hectares in central Nova Scotia, approximately 80% of which is forested. Of this woodland, 57% is privately owned, 25% is held by large industries, 14% is Crown land, and the remaining 4% is held by municipalities, First Nations, and other owners. Nova is the most recent member and twelfth site of the Model Forest Network, a national program established in the early 1990s to address the kinds of issues being discussed at this forum today. It seeks to move beyond blaming and conflict and acknowledge that we need to work together. Several key principles guide the program:

-- The Alliance seeks to achieve the three dimensions of sustainability -- economic , environmental, and social;

-- Partnerships are diverse, as everyone has to be there -- tourism and environmental interests as well as the industry.

-- The focus is on large-scale working models and the development and application of new knowledge to create on-the-ground solutions and promote ecologically sound practices.

This talk will focus on how the Nova Forest Alliance is moving to sustainable forest management in a partnership. Nova Scotia is not unlike PEI, with issues including clearcuts, sustainability, premature harvest, and loss of biodiversity. The Nova Forest Alliance followed the collapse of the Nova Scotia Coalition for Sustainable Forest Management, partly due to landowner concerns about the impacts of the strategy on landowner rights. The Alliance was developed through a series of workshops involving some 50 organizations, many of which had taken part in the previous Coalition. The workshops explored the Model Forest Program and its benefits, and examined questions of the nature of sustainable forest management, its impact on landowners, and how to measure it. With regard to landowners, the Model Forest approach was presented as non-regulatory, but rather bringing ideas and guidelines to assist landowners in decisions.

Nova Scotia was fighting fires on issues like clearcutting and riparian zones. It was necessary to look ahead and state a vision for Nova Scotia's central forest. Through the workshops, the initiative developed a vision of Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), fairly general, but a start:

"Balancing the extensive range of demands placed on the forest today and the demands of future generations while ensuring environmental sustainability, ecological integrity, and multiple economic and social benefits."

As well, the group developed a vision of its own role: "To achieve SFM through a co-operative partnership within the context of Nova Scotia's Acadian forest ecosystem." Goals were developed in support of that vision, including:

-- establishing a diverse working partnership;

-- jointly defining SFM;

-- developing and demonstrating management practice that contribute to SFM; and

-- disseminating the group's knowledge both within the network and beyond.

Progress has been made in that all players are at the table, but much remains to be done. There was some mistrust among the players with regard to agendas, requiring emphasis on building the level of trust by learning from each other. The group began its work with a public opinion survey which identified a lot of negative perceptions of forestry among the public at large. On this survey, the different sectors separately released findings of interest to them. We did a second survey, and this time we released the full findings jointly, with all sectors at the table. Continuing effort is required to manage real or perceived breaches of trust and strengthen the partnership.

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In terms of structure, the organization is non-profit. Its governance is made up of a Partnership Committee, on which all 46 member organizations are represented; a 10-member Management Committee representing 10 broad sectors of partners and responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Alliance, and sectorally balanced Working Committees responsible for projects.

So how do we define SFM? We decided that all players had to be at the table -- no one stakeholder be it industry, or landowners, can do this alone. We established a process to bring together input from a community consultative process and scientific input. Community input was obtained from internal consultations by partners in the alliance, and by discussions with a wide range of community stakeholders including groups like the tourism industry and local youth. We asked them questions about their goals for the forest: why is the forest important to you? what is its value to you? what is wanted in the future? About fifteen priorities were identified through this process, with the top three being water quality, including buffer zones; emulating natural processes in the forest; and renewing the forest after harvest. The Alliance is now using this input to model four different management scenarios for the 375,000 hectares of forest in its region, with the intent to bring them back to the community groups for comment. This work has been under way for 14 months, and is intended to be completed after four more months of work, leading to a consensus on the best mix of forest management approaches. Consultations to date with groups such as the Federation of Agriculture have been positive.

The next question is how to implement the approaches we develop. We are also working to develop a Best Management Practices Manual. The work initially began as two separate processes and manuals for contractors and woodlot owners, but has been merged. As well, the process has been expanded to bring in additional environmental input, to ensure that the work goes beyond just adjusting the status quo, and "puts the forest first."

Some important lessons have been learned from the work to date:

- maintaining the partnership is an ongoing challenge;
- leadership must be independent;
- the partnership can muster incredible resources;

- work must start with the basics and demystify the process;
- the industry has a huge stake;
- small private landowners must rise to the challenge; and
- environmental and other groups must play a strong role in continuing to push us towards sustainability.

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Hon. Mitch Murphy, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry: "Beyond the Clearcuts"

This forum is a valuable contribution to forestry policy. The Backgrounder raises some key points for discussion in its critique of current forestry approaches and its call on government to demonstrate a rationale for those approaches, and to redefine its role and relationships in the forestry sector. We need to look forward -- dwelling on the differing views of the past holds us back. We need a broad-based approach based on an inclusive process. All Islanders have a stake and a say on the forest resource on PEI, from different perspectives -- harvest, wildlife, recreation, other products, landscape, ecological role -- and all are important. That broad-based discussion has not really happened to this point. There have been a series of reports over the years, including several Royal Commission on the Land, the Round Table on Resource Land Use, but forestry issues have generally played a secondary role to agriculture.

Where do we go from here, in terms of our forest resource? PEI is unique in terms of the degree of private ownership of the forests, and therefore landowners must be engaged as a key part of the process; otherwise the process is not off to a good start, and will not take us where we want to go. Users must be there, too, whether they are using the woods for recreation, or timber, or aesthetic enjoyment, or ground hemlock. It will not be easy to work with the conflicting viewpoints, but it must be done. Government would like to work with a group that is developing that consensus.

One of the things government wants to do is to work more closely with private landowners, and be more supportive than in the past. To use an example from the agricultural sector, government has been assisting farmers who want to improve the environmental sustainability of their farm operations, the caveat being that the farmer has to develop an Environmental Farm Plan. This program has been very well used by the agricultural sector, and hundreds of farm plans have been completed. The details of how such a program would work in the forestry sector will need to be developed with landowners, by assessing the resource, its multiple functions and how to enhance them. A process for development and implementation of Woodlot Management Plans will be established, and government will provide some assistance for people who want to make those improvements on their land. The criteria are not in place yet, because that engagement process hasn't been carried out yet -- but since 90% of the land is privately owned, landowners have to be engaged in the process.

With regard to publicly owned forests, government must become a role model, providing ideas, approaches, and examples through the 18,700 hectares of public forest. The vision must provide for improvement in a number of areas, including biodiversity, woodlot management, and public use and access. That is why government has established the public Forest Council, with diverse representation from the community, to engage Islanders in thinking about the forest in a holistic way, and to advise government on non-timber uses of the public forests.

In conclusion, a broad-based discussion is needed, in which everyone impacted has a voice. From the departmental point of view, we are ready and anxious to get on with developing that new vision for the forests. We are quite open to new ideas and new ways of thinking about the forest resource, and to use public forests as a model to achieve that vision.

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Gary Schneider, Supervisor, Macphail Woods Ecological Forestry Project: "Sustaining Our Island"

The title of this talk is "Sustaining the Island" because we are integral to the health of the forest. The great American conservationist, Aldo Leopold, said, "You can treat forests as a commodity, or you can treat them as a community." He recommended that we think of forests as a community, in which humans are responsible partners. We tend to think of forests as some sort of resource, pulp or sawlogs, although we pay lip service to other uses.

I want to give some examples of how we could move towards sustainability in our forests. We must first look to the past. We had fantastic trees and wildlife before the Europeans came. Now, we have lost many of our animal species, and our forests have become a place to stash old appliances. We need to throw out this hardwood/softwood debate as a huge red herring. It doesn't make sense to talk about poplar and sugar maple, or spruce and pine, in the same breath. The real question is, do we want long-lived high quality trees, or mostly young, short-lived trees such as those forecast this morning for 2035? The hardwood/softwood debate really has nothing to do with forest practices on PEI.

Practices are still based on large clearcuts, which are left to recover afterwards. The forests have great resilience, and it is amazing how some of the cuts regenerate, although seed sources are often missing. Replanting is even worse -- burn the brush, plant with single species, and herbicide -- practices that don't improve the health of the site, and carry a high cost. Nowadays, some hardwoods are allowed to remain, but the plantations soon become dominated with one species of conifer, single-age and single-height conifers. The plantations are much simpler than our natural forest -- less diverse, less healthy, and more vulnerable. Alexander Yablonsky, a forester with international experience brought in by Nova Scotia to advise on silviculture, saw the clearcut and monoculture syndrome as an obsolete, retrograde approach.

None of us has all the answers to what's sustainable, but most of us know what's not sustainable. Just to cite a couple of examples from my own community -- mechanical clearcuts on Crown land during breeding season, cutting hardwoods down and leaving them lying. A 50-acre stand of young trees, bought by a contractor from another part of PEI, clearcut, and flipped. What kind of

culture does this to its woodlands? These two things are examples of a culture that throws its junk in the woods.

We need more emphasis on education, incentives, and regulation. It was surprising to hear the Minister say that the Round Table was primarily focused on agricultural issues. We sweated blood to get forestry issues into the report, especially with regard to public forests, but the recommendations were mostly ignored. Crown lands should be an educational tool to help Islanders look after their woodlands. They are marked with acorns but these lands are the least likely to be planted with oaks -- rather, they are more likely to have clearcuts and plantations. Large blocks of Crown land are being tendered for harvest. We think we're beyond that, but we're not.

We need action on a number of fronts:

-- The change in philosophy to seeing the forest as a community means leaving cover trees; keeping valuable species, not harvesting in breeding season, protecting rare habitat. I think the government will commit to those approaches -- it has to, we are getting left behind other provinces on these issues. We must not delay these approaches on the basis that more research is needed. We do not hear these calls for research into the effects of clearcutting large tracts -- this erring on the side of caution is an effort to delay an unwanted course of action;

-- Incentives must be introduced for thinning, underplanting, diversification, and enrichment;

-- As recommended by the Round Table on Resource Land Use, there should be less monocultures, less burning and less use of herbicides;

-- It was interesting to hear that J. D. Irving uses a bigger buffer zone than PEic the province accepted the 20–30 metre buffer zone recommended by the Round Table, but is allowing so much cutting that it is hardly a buffer zone;

-- We also need regulations providing for standing dead trees (more than the 5–10 snags a hectare currently proposed) to ensure wildlife habitat;

-- The forest districts should be eliminated and replaced with planning units of watersheds or groups of watersheds.

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We hear talk of certification being required in order to stay in the marketplace. If we think replanting clearcuts will be sufficient, we are wrong. I have heard plantations likened to a cabbage patch -- but plantations are far more complex than a cabbage patch, are expected to meet a wider range of needs, and are aimed at a market decades into the future. Forests are very complex ecosystems and we are far from understanding them. Most of the plantations are not doing well -- large plantations are dying, and some red pine stands are collapsing after only 40 years. We are not talking about 100 cords per acre from these.

Good forest management has so much to commend it. It improves biodiversity, improves wildlife habitat, is a source of high-value high-quality products, reduces carbon loss from brush burning, eliminates herbicide use, helps keep waters clean, creates long-term employment, and ensures access to markets. We have a huge amount to gain. To do so, we need to see ourselves as a forest community, and not view the forests as a commodity to get rich quick on. We must talk about the future, not the past.

Alan Baker, Woodlot owner: "Options and Economics"

As a speaker here, I feel like a fish out of water -- I am a fisherman, and a fish processor, and, for the past 10 years, I have represented the Canadian lobster industry to the world. That sector is also looking at issues of sustainability, and is pursuing it through membership in the PEI FoodTrust, a new provincial initiative seeking to ensure that food production in PEI is economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially acceptable.

I have some problems with the term "sustainability." What does it mean? The dictionary defines it as "the minimum level that life can survive at." Others might say, "to take no more from the earth than the sun can provide." But I prefer to look for growth, not minimum survival. The FoodTrust approach is based on the three pillars noted above. Simply put, we can think of sustainability as money in the bank -- it is okay to live on the interest, but not to draw down the capital, to borrow from the future.

The fishery differs from forestry in that fish are a publicly owned resource and forests are privately owned. Sustainability is a major issue in the fishery when dealing with a common property owned resource -- management is a challenge. I hope that in the PEI context, the different ownership structure of the forests leads to a different outcome.

We operate several businesses as well, including ecotourism: a wilderness lodge set in 175 acres of managed woodlot, which in turn is set in the middle of 10,000 acres of forest, full of wildlife. We get visitors from all over the world and from the Island as well, pursuing the intangible aesthetic value of the setting. In FoodTrust, a core theme is that PEI's primary industries are the foundation of the tourism industry, because they are the very fabric of the province, they make up the landscape and the lifestyle and our culture. We are all interdependent -- that is what the Minister meant by holistic .

I was described as a landowner, but I do not see myself as a "landowner." Nobody owns the land, we are just residents on it. We have some time to be a steward of some land, to leave it in better shape than we found it. It is not complicated, although it is a big job. We can turn away from our obligations. That is easier if we are ignorant of them. We talk of education, but some turn away from the information that is there, and choose to remain ignorant, and many are too busy to seek out the information that is there. We come by our forest lands in many ways, and often not with an intent to manage it, but we have to work together, take time from the haste of our lives, and engage in strategic planning and forward thinking.

On our woodlot, we are doing what we feel is right. We are managing for a mixed age forest, trying for that elusive Acadian forest and wildlife. Biomass, meaning productivity in output of

salable wood, will occur by itself if we look after the land. We harvest for firewood and sales, using ecoforestry approaches, selective cutting and horse logging. We want to do things right, but the economic temptation is there. We are not in need, but if we were, or if we were ignorant of alternative choices, we might make the wrong decisions.

The most poignant question of the day was the call, earlier, for help to determine the future value of forest land. We need a program or a mechanism where we can borrow on the future value of our woods so that we can carry out needed work and make the right decisions. We need someone who can come in and give an estimate of the future value of the property for the next 20 to 30 years. That estimate could then be taken to the bank to borrow funds to carry out remediation and treatments to realize that value -- to create a mixed species mixed age woodlot that would be an annuity for the future. Plans currently available from government and private technicians involve treatments which cost more than the value of the first round of wood extraction. Most programs from Forestry target fibre production as the priority and are not holistic . So I am making a plea, as we enter into some sort of public process, for measures in that area.

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Other concerns include the need for education and advocacy. We are doing our best in our woodlot to use approaches which are of interest to our neighbours and friends and provide them with some examples. Many clearcuts are taking place in the region. These can be remediated, but deforestation and conversion of forest to agricultural and blueberry production are even more serious concerns. Issues such as these must be addressed as we enter into a series of fora to explore forest sustainability.

Summary and Wrap-Up

Wendy MacDonald

The day has provided many excellent presentations with a range of perspectives, but the time was not always available to thrash these out. The workshop had three main themes -- forest as landscape, as habitat, and as industry -- and a final session to bring the three together. There are other perspectives as well, including forest as ecological resource. Over the past decade, these goals have come into increasing competition, and indeed conflict.

We heard a dichotomy of forests as commodity, or as community. But the reality is even more complex. Within the concept of forest as community, we heard that some of the new measures under way in the agricultural sector to preserve ecological integrity are at odds with the preservation of the landscape. Does the same hold for the forests? In the area of forests as commodity, it is clear that the industry has come through a wrenchingly difficult decade and that those conflicts are still with us, adding to the challenge of moving forward.

Strong differences of opinion exist, and are likely to continue, on whether the extent of harvest in the past decade was the "right thing" to do. But we would all likely agree that it wasn't "done right." It could have been done far differently and far better -- in ways that captured more wealth for PEI, in ways that respected the environment, and in ways that did not have such divisive

effects on the social fabric of the community -- both rural/urban and within the industry -- which have left such a legacy of strained relationships as we try now to build and move forward.

As we look to that starting point of consensus -- agreement that we wouldn't want another decade like the one we just had -- we can take that as a basis to move forward. What is encouraging as we look to the things our speakers have told us today, both our speakers from here and from away, is that there are many insights and examples on how to do things better. There are examples both from other provinces and within PEI of how things are being done right.

We heard that JDI, although a corporate player, takes a long-term view of the resource -- and that long-term perspective, rather than the in-and-out, quick buck, is the basis of sustainable approaches. We heard of the experiences of the Nova Model Forest Alliance, and local woodlot owner groups.

We also heard indications of changes in provincial forestry policy, to a more open, flexible set of approaches to managing the forests and working with woodlot owners, and an interest in a dialogue. It appeared that government would like to see a consensus emerge from stakeholders on a vision and goals for the forest. We can see from today that there is hope for that, but that it's not going to be an easy process. Yet it was quite clear that without greater agreement on what should be done, it's questionable how far the province will go in reinvesting significantly in this area -- and also questionable how successful they'll be in convincing the federal government to reinvest.

The question, then, of how we move forward to a made-in-PEI, made-by-Islanders, forestry policy is indeed a challenging one. We look to the example of Nova Scotia and see that their first attempt fell by the wayside -- so even where things appear to be going well, it wasn't easy, and they went through a learning curve on how to bring together stakeholders in this very complex area. There are encouraging indications that with new leadership and new membership in the Forest Improvement Association, there may be more capacity to reach out to stakeholders who haven't necessarily been there in the immediate past -- who may have been there years ago and then drifted away. If we are to develop that broad consensus, we do need to try and bring those interests back to the table, and also to draw in interests who may not have been there in the past, such as the tourism industry.

We need to bring in all those players because one of the things we need to do is learn from each other. For that reason, this initiative should not be government-led. A solution which is dropped from above is not as effective than one which emerges from a balance of different perspectives, trying to work toward a new and hopefully more socially and environmentally acceptable way of doing things, as well as a more economically productive way.

Where to from here? It is hoped that the Forum has been a positive step. We have heard a diverse range of views. Perhaps from here a dialogue will start -- and it is also hoped that the documents which will emerge from this Forum will contribute to that. The FIA in particular faces a challenge of building on this process, and building on the opportunities we have heard about -- moving beyond the events of the past and towards a much more positive set of outcomes for the future.

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Afterword: Key Themes

The foregoing represents a summary of presentations by the Forum speakers. In this section, several key themes are highlighted, fleshed out by the questions and discussions which followed each of the presentations and panel sessions.

Education

A number of speakers highlighted the importance of education -- but it was clear that this term held different meanings for the various proponents.

- -- Some speakers called for more education of the general public on the role, importance, and nature of the forests. The term in this context, however, can be a euphemism for promotion of varying forestry approaches and philosophies and stakeholder perspectives.
- Taking education in its more literal sense, speakers and participants from the habitat session in particular, called for more forestry-related curriculum content in the elementary-secondary system. If this is to be achieved, however, one speaker observed, it must begin with an interested teacher who selects forest-related materials from the wide range of resources vying for a place in the school curriculum. To ensure interested teachers, attention needs to be given to drawing more science graduates to the teaching profession, and training them appropriately. Measures such as those described by JDic the Forest Discovery Box, summer training sessions for teachers represent initiatives in this area.
- Other participants placed priority on education within the forestry sector, particularly with regard to educating landowners on forest management approaches. Different views emerged on government's past role in this regard. Some speakers expressed strong disappointment with the perceived lack of effort in this direction, while other speakers described a host of government initiatives over the years which had struggled to engage their target learners, with limited uptake. Another speaker observed that some people choose to remain ignorant, and many others do not take the time from their busy lives to learn about something that for most is a minor issue. Alternative approaches, self-directed by learner groups, were described by the Queens County Woodlot Owners and the Nova Forest Alliance. Such approaches have the merit of responding to learner needs, and as well, if the group is broad enough, of providing an opportunity for dialogue and mutual learning. At the individual level, woodlot management plans offer considerable potential as both a vehicle for landowner education, and a means to plan harvest activities.
- PEI was also seen as lacking an educated, skilled, trained forestry workforce. The need for education and training for forest workers was also highlighted as essential to sustainability, safety, and industry competitiveness and productivity. Workers must understand the forest management goals being pursued and approaches being used by their employers, and be able to take part in quality assurance measures to ensure those outcomes.

Forestry Approaches and Practices on PEI

The various presentations suggested that on many fronts, PEI is uncomfortably behind the times in many of its forestry practices and approaches:

- One speaker described a range of deplorable harvest practices by some forest contractors, characterizing them as the worst he had seen in any forestry jurisdiction. Past efforts to rein in these practices have fallen through with the demise of the Code of Practice regulatory initiative. Renewed efforts at effective measures, through licensing, are seen as urgently needed. Clearcutting, although not as reprehensible as the above, was also seen as an overused and often inappropriate approach, characterized by a lack of knowledge of alternatives and a lack of proper equipment and tools to carry out those alternatives.
- A number of speakers expressed concerns with government's focus on reforestation through softwood plantations as the core of its forest management approach. With regard to the plantations themselves, concerns were expressed about the ecological integrity, the environmental impacts, and the economic rationale for single-species, even-aged plantings. It appeared that the industrial trend elsewhere is away from single species stands, and that plantations are not seen as the appropriate treatment for every site. More generally, a need was seen to diversify forest management in PEI beyond softwood plantations to encompass a comprehensive silviculture program that incorporates improvements in all stand types.
- As noted above, the skills and training of the forest harvesting workforce are deficient compared to other jurisdictions.
- The public policy process in PEI in the area of forestry has been weakened by fragmented leadership, strong perceptions of exclusionary processes and a lack of transparency, non-involvement of stakeholders outside the industry, and resulting conflict, blaming, and rejection of responsibility. These circumstances have allowed the concerns outlined above to emerge or continue.

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The Way Ahead

Despite lingering hard feelings, all speakers were united on the need for prompt action to overcome these challenges. It was widely recognized that markets are placing growing emphasis on certification that wood products have been produced sustainably. PEI is at considerable risk of losing its markets if it does not take immediate steps to prepare, by enhancing training and substantially changing its harvesting and forest management practices. There are significant opportunities to move ahead in this regard:

- Much can be learned from our own past -- the *1988 Forest Management Act*, the studies and reports of the 1990s, the experiences of the Code of Practice initiative, the good practices going on among us even now, the member education efforts of bodies such as the FIA and the Queen's County Woodlot Owners.
- The approaches and processes of bodies such as the Nova Forest Alliance and the woodlot owner groups in the region offer both guidance and information resources.

- The industry's changing structure on PEI brings in new, science-based technologies and management approaches. At the same time, the widely distributed nature of forest ownership in PEI offers a safeguard against monolithic approaches.
- The Province has expressed an intent to reinvest in this area through the provision of supports to forest landowners for development and implementation of woodlot management plans.
- Finally, the Province has expressed strong interest in working with a process to develop a new, broadly based vision and goals for forest management in PEI. In discussion, some clear parameters emerged for this exercise:
 - It should establish where we are today, in terms of the forest resource, including wildlife, and should map out the values, both monetary and otherwise, of that resource;
 - It should define a vision of where we want to be, with a timeframe extending beyond our lifetimes. Lacking that vision, we have been reactive to external forces and the changing nature of the forest itself;
 - The process should be broadly inclusive; everyone has a role. The nature and duration of that process should be defined by those participants. There may be a place for a local component, such as the agro-conservation clubs now being established at the community level;
 - The University of Prince Edward Island was seen as having a further role to play in initiating or furthering the process of dialogue begun at the Forum.

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