

# TIME FOR A CHANGE?



"I don't think putting the local communities in charge of managing forestry, as complex, as complicated as it is, is the right thing to do."

- Jim Irving, answering a question in an interview, Saint John, 2003.

"A good forest economy would be locally complex. People in the local community would be employed in forest management, logging, and sawmilling, in a variety of value-adding small factories and shops, and in satellite or supporting industries. The local community, that is, would be enabled by its economy to realize the maximum income from its local resource. This is the opposite of a colonial economy. It would answer unequivocally the question, To whom is the value added?"

- Wendell Berry in *Conserving Forest Communities*.

# Half our Forest is Crown Land

In New Brunswick, about half of our Acadian forest, characterized by leafy hardwoods and evergreens, is held in public trust on Crown land – meaning that the provincial government of New Brunswick is responsible for taking care of the forest on behalf of all of us.

## • Who is in Charge?

The provincial government has jurisdiction over the management of forest resources on Crown land subject to Aboriginal and treaty rights. As the Crown lands of New Brunswick were never ceded by treaty to the Crown, as was required under British law, First Nations claim Aboriginal title and press this claim.

## • What's Crown Land For?

The Supreme Court of Canada holds that New Brunswick's Crown lands are held by the Province of New Brunswick for the benefit of the people of New Brunswick, not as their owner but as their trustee. The idea of a public trust, handed down to us through English Common Law, says the resources of the commons are "gifts of nature's

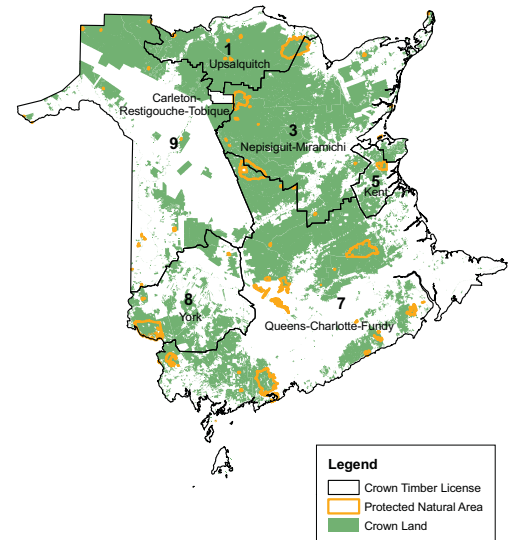
bounty" to benefit present and future generations.

As trustee of our forest commons, the Crown lands, the provincial government is obliged to maintain their inherent value for all people, including those not yet born. Where the government fails in its trusteeship, citizens have a right to defend this public trust.

## • How Does It Work Today?

Crown land is divided into six license areas granted to four corporations operating mills in New Brunswick. The licenses give the four corporations the privilege to cut timber and the obligation to manage the license area to meet the goals and objectives prescribed by the Department of Natural Resources. The licenses are perpetual and granted or transferred without public hearings. Royalties or stumpage fees are paid for the wood cut. Other companies operating mills in New Brunswick and First Nation communities are granted a portion of the annual

Crown Timber Administrative Units



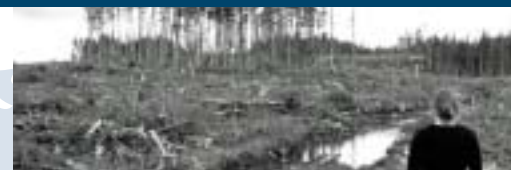
allowable cut from these licenses under the direction of the four license holders.

## • What is Crown Land Managed For?

- 75% - 77% of Crown land is managed to feed softwood to the mills owned by the license holders.
- 23%-25% of Crown land is managed to provide wildlife habitat and watercourse buffers.

## The Problem

New Brunswickers, their communities and forest ecosystems are not being well-served by the current tenure and management system. The emphasis is on deriving endless economic growth to generate ever-increasing wealth for corporations, not to benefit the people of New Brunswick. Rather than contributing to the well-being of communities and ecosystems, the current system is undermining them.



New Brunswickers and First Nations have repeatedly said that the current system fails to promote their interests in forest conservation and generating economic benefits for their communities. The most common concerns expressed at the extensive consultations undertaken by the Premier's Round Table on the Environment and Economy (1990), the Commission on Rural Land Use and the Environment

(1993), and the Select Committee on Wood Supply (2004) concerned land tenure on Crown land and the way the forest is managed on those lands. Despite interest being expressed for a move towards community forestry with the development of pilot projects, the government of New Brunswick refuses to consider community forestry as an option.





# Community Forests: A Solution

Community forests offer a viable alternative to the corporate tenure system. They offer a solution to the grossly inequitable distribution of wealth derived from the forest, inadequate meaningful public participation, overcutting and lack of regard for the integrity, resilience and beauty of our forest ecosystems.

## • What Are They?

Community forests are forests in which tenure has been granted to communities. The use and management of community forests are governed by a high degree of local decision-making.

Community-based forest management is a forest management approach



conducted on a community forest by local people for the benefit of local people.

Because communities and forests are diverse and complex, many models of community forests exist to reflect their values and principles. Community forests have the potential to diversify local economies, make ecosystem-

based management possible, and provide for a more equitable distribution of wealth. Communities can decide on the mix of uses most appropriate to them, strive to add more value to each tree cut before it is exported, utilize the forest for tourism opportunities, educational initiatives, and non-timber forest products.



# A Way Forward with Community Forestry

The development of community forest tenure system in New Brunswick will require the establishment of new regional and local institutions to administer and manage them. There are lessons to be learned about how to support community forests from jurisdictions across Canada such as British Columbia and Quebec, and around the world.

Working community forests across Canada and around the world have shown that a wide range of benefits are possible including: greater

economic benefits, economic diversification, more equitable distribution of wealth, consistent levels of local employment, wildlife conservation, habitat protection, educational and research opportunities, flood and erosion control, scenic and aesthetic benefits, stabilization of local water supply, recreational/eco-tourism opportunities and enhancement of local quality of life.

Over 50 countries are moving towards greater community control over their forests for sustainability. The provinces of British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec

have a number of community forestry projects operating.

One example of a successful community forest operation is located in Revelstoke, British Columbia. Founded in 1993, Revelstoke is a city-owned corporation that operates a 120,000 ha license. It is managed by a board of directors composed of the mayor, two city councillors, the city administrator, and three appointees from the community. A management committee including industry partners provides operational advice to the directors.

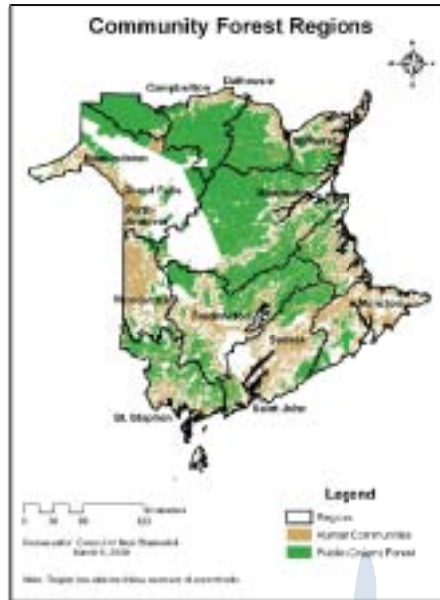
## • Community Forest Boards

Jurisdictions such as British Columbia have created community forest licenses, which are typically administered by a local community-based forest board. Such boards tend to include but are not limited to: First Nations representatives, municipal representatives, economic development representatives, forestry companies (harvest and renewal), tourist operations, workers and unions, recreational groups, environmental representatives and NGOs. They typically employ a general manager and a professional forestry staff.

## Tenure Reform & Community Forestry in New Brunswick

### • Where?

Watershed boundaries provide a natural dividing line between community forest areas enabling decisions about forest use and management to be made that protect the well-being of our rivers, lakes and streams. New Brunswick's Crown land can readily be divided into 12 regions using watershed boundaries. Within each of these community forest regions, watershed boundaries can



also be used to designate license and management areas.

### • Governed by Whom?

Regional forest boards could be established to administer the community forests within their regions through a legally-binding agreement with the Department of Natural Resources. Licenses could be created for First Nations, community co-ops, woodlot owner organizations, businesses, and municipalities.

## • How Would It Be Different?

A system of community forest tenure in New Brunswick would contribute to local economic stability because operations usually hire locally, buy supplies locally, and offer logs to local manufacturers. Community forestry can help prevent devastating boom and bust cycles because wealth generated from the use of the forest tends to stay in the community instead of being used to pay distant shareholders. Because more money remains in the community, potential exists to diversify local economies through production of value-added wood products. This long-term community economic development contributes to greater community wealth that is more evenly distributed, which in turn increases community self-reliance, and decreases dependence on provincial and federal governments. With community forests, local communities are dependent on their forests for economic, ecological, and recreational needs. These are true incentives to manage in ways that sustain the health and integrity of forest ecosystems. Consequently, community forestry usually results in smaller-scale, ecologically benign forestry practices. Furthermore, it is easier to manage for a wide range of values such as protection of drinking water, ecosystem integrity and resilience, wildlife habitat, recreational trails and viewscapes, at the local level.

Sign up to the Acadian Forest email list at:  
[forest@conservationcouncil.ca](mailto:forest@conservationcouncil.ca)

## For more information:



**Conservation Council of New Brunswick**  
180 St. John St.  
Fredericton, NB E3B 4A9  
Tel: (506) 458-8747  
Email: [forest@conservationcouncil.ca](mailto:forest@conservationcouncil.ca)  
[www.conservationcouncil.ca](http://www.conservationcouncil.ca) or  
[www.acadianforest.ca](http://www.acadianforest.ca)



**Falls Brook Centre**  
125 South Knowlesville Rd.,  
Knowlesville, NB E7L 1B1  
Tel : (506) 375-8143  
Email : [ja@fallsbrookcentre.ca](mailto:ja@fallsbrookcentre.ca)  
[www.fallsbrookcentre.ca](http://www.fallsbrookcentre.ca)