



# New Brunswick Federation of Woodlot Owners

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## What Have You Done For Me Lately?

Is the Canadian Forest sector in hard times? It seems like this question has an easy and obvious answer...YES. Some say the current state of the sector is the worst in history, or at least in the past 50 years. Regardless of the current state, we should take this time to take a hard look at our operations and how we do business. In New Brunswick, regional marketing boards and woodlot owners have been feeling the pinch over the last couple of years and some would say more than their fair share (marketing board sales have dropped by ~ \$68 million or 49% since 2003-04). Everyone is looking at ways to save money and try to get out of "survival" mode and back into "operational" mode.

New Brunswick's seven regional marketing boards all belong to the umbrella organization known as the New Brunswick Federation of Woodlot Owners. All woodlot owners are considered members of the Federation. The Federation is a non-profit organization which receives its funding from dues paid by the seven marketing boards. In examining areas to save money, some woodlot owners and marketing board directors ask, "what does the Federation do for us and why are we paying to belong? If we withdraw from the Federation we would save some money." Others argue that in these difficult times it is more important than ever to remain united and forge ahead together, there is strength in numbers. Fingers could be pointed in many directions as to why some individuals become frustrated with the Federation but the biggest finger can probably be pointed at the lack of communication to woodlot owners as to the activities of the Federation.

The goal of this article is to shed some light on the many activities the Federation performs on behalf of the province's 40,000 woodlot owners. The list of activities and initiatives is comprehensive but not exhaustive.

- 1) Working on Department of Natural Resources programs and policies that effect woodlots:
  - a) **Primary Source of Supply** or more recently "Equitable Treatment for Woodlot Owners". This is an ongoing pursuit and has been since 1992. With the election of a new provincial government, there is renewed hope that this issue will be dealt with. The Federation is continually pursuing a policy that assures the fair treatment of woodlot owners by preventing unfair competition from Crown land.
  - b) The Provincial **Silviculture Program** has been the shining light of the woodlot sector the past few years. The Federation has continually lobbied government to

- ensure there is a funding commitment and that the economic benefits of the program are realized. We were successful in obtaining a long-term commitment with annual budget increases from the previous government and believe the new Liberal government will honour this commitment.
- c) The Federation continues to work on the **Transportation Certificate** program to make the program more effective and also works with the DNR on system administration.
  - d) The Federation is working to ensure the **Species at Risk Act** does not penalize woodlot owners by restricting what we can do on our land without compensation. Our message to the government is: “treat woodlot owners as partners. No one in New Brunswick is more interested in wildlife than we are. Whatever else you do, don’t think you can take our land without paying for it.”
  - e) The Federation continues to participate on the **Crown Royalty Review Committee** working towards finding a method to better represent royalties for timber harvested on Crown land than the current survey method of private woodlot transactions.
- 2) In January 2007, the Federation presented our sector’s concerns and issues to the **Forestry Task Force Cabinet Committee** consisting of department Ministers from Natural Resources, Business New Brunswick, Finance and Energy. The presentation was very well received and a productive dialogue ensued. The Federation feels this was a significant first step in forming a productive relationship with our new government.
  - 3) Working with other Provincial Government Departments in the interests of woodlot owners:
    - a) The Federation has lobbied the Department of Environment and Local Government for a more effective application of the Clean Water Act.
    - b) Worked with the Department of Transportation and the Forest Products Association concerning weight tolerances and spring weight restrictions.
    - c) Worked with the Department of Finance on Fuel Tax Point of Sale changes in collaboration with the Agricultural Alliance to prevent the loss of point of sale reduction of the provincial portion of sales tax.
  - 4) The Federation continually acts as a liaison with other organizations such as the Forest Products Association, Fundy Model Forest, Agricultural Alliance, Canadian Forest Service, University of New Brunswick and the Maritime College of Forest Technology to address issues of common concern and promote woodlot issues.
  - 5) The Federation is a member of the Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners and has worked on such issues as changes to the Income Tax Act so we no longer have to pay taxes when a woodlot is passed on in the family, certification and developing certification standards, providing input to the Federal Species at Risk Act, Private Woodlot Strategic Initiative Model Forest Network, and ongoing sharing of information between provincial organizations.

- 6) The Federation has been actively participating in a **Workplace Health and Safety Compensation Committee (WHSCC) Legislative Review for Logging, Silviculture and Arboriculture Operations**. This review is intended to strengthen and adjust safety regulations that affect the forest sector to better reflect the changing industry. Changes pertaining specifically to woodlot owners concern training and the practice of working alone. Woodlot owner concerns have been brought to the committee and are being dealt with.
- 7) The Federation provides a monthly newsletter to marketing boards outlining the month's events and the activities of the Federation. Additionally, the Federation publishes an annual pamphlet highlighting the activities of the Federation and discussing woodlot owner issues. This pamphlet is distributed throughout the province and to all provincial MLAs. A monthly market survey of provincial mill prices is also compiled by the Federation and distributed to the marketing boards to compare prices around the province.
- 8) The Federation has developed a logo (as displayed at the top left of this document) intended to bring recognition and an easily identifiable affiliation with the Federation.
- 9) For the past 18 months the Federation has been working on a management information system that will provide the marketing boards with a state of the art system for managing silviculture, certification and wood sales information. This has been facilitated with funding from the ACOA Atlantic Innovation Fund.
- 10) The Federation has worked in conjunction with other groups to promote the recognition of **Environmental Goods and Services**. Woodlots provide much of the scenery, clean water and clean air that society enjoys and as such owners should be compensated financially for these goods and services.
- 11) Day-to-day items such as responding to woodlot owner requests for information, media requests and requests from various research bodies.

What woodlot owners and marketing boards need to remember is that the Federation is not a couple of individuals working in Fredericton...it is all of us working together. We must remember and practice this important message.

**Support the Federation of New Brunswick Woodlot Owners Today!!**

Contribute \$20.00 and have a chance to win a GPS unit (draw will take place June 30/07).

GPS supplied by BAP Equipment – [www.bapequipment.com](http://www.bapequipment.com).

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I would like to receive email updates on the Federation's activities.

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