

Final
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NATIONAL FOREST STRATEGY
(2003-2008)

A SUSTAINABLE FOREST:
THE CANADIAN COMMITMENT

TOWARD THE SUSTAINABLE FOREST

Over the years, forest-related interests, benefits and values have evolved and expanded. As a result, new knowledge and technologies, responsibilities and partnerships have emerged that constantly increase our understanding of Canada's forest and how we, as citizens of a forest nation, relate to it. To keep pace with this change, we continue to deepen our knowledge about the forest.

Today, everyone in the Canadian forest community has a role to play in ensuring our forest heritage. This community has grown to include governments, Aboriginal Peoples (Indian, Inuit, Métis), the timber-based industry, non-timber forest product organizations, academia, research institutes, the recreation and tourism industry, forest practitioners, private woodlot owners, environmentalists and an increasing number of women and youth in these groups. With increasing knowledge, even more organizations and individuals are participating in forest-related decisions.

Forest management has become more challenging as forest managers attempt to balance many different concerns, policies and practices. For example, forest-related objectives and commitments now encompass matters such as the conservation of biological diversity, Aboriginal Peoples' rights, rural community well-being, employment, private land ownership, international trade and environmental protection. As well, newly discovered uses for non-timber products, such as medicinal plants and bio-plastics from forest products, have been added to the traditional, industrial uses of the forest.

At the centre of this continually changing arena of forest policies, practices and interests is sustainability – widely seen today as the foremost goal of forest management. The National Forest Strategy, a broadly based public initiative, identifies and charts the direction that Canadians, as stewards of the forest, need to move toward in order to deal with evolving social, cultural, institutional, environmental and economic factors in our journey toward sustainable forest management. As Canadians, we have reason to be proud that Canada was the first nation to form a national forest strategy, thus establishing a clear and widely based commitment to the pursuit of the sustainable forest. The 2003-2008 Strategy continues this leadership tradition.

Canadians are invited to share and participate in a newer, bolder expression of continuing, responsible forest stewardship embodied in this Strategy. All members of the forest community are challenged to carry out the Strategy's actions and goals. United under a common vision, our efforts can only benefit present and future generations.

VISION

Both as Canadians and as members of the forest community, we have come together to set a vision and a strategy for the nation's forest. We see ourselves as responsible

stewards, who want Canada's forest to be healthy and managed sustainably so that its functions, biodiversity, resilience and productivity are maintained over the long term. The health of the forest is directly linked to environmental processes on local, regional and international scales as well as to the social, cultural, spiritual and economic well-being of us all. As a result, we want to improve our understanding of how we are a part of and how we affect the forest – in short, to act on our increasingly informed understanding to become even better stewards of our forest resource.

To reach this goal, we want forest management that brings together diverse values and that ensures the conditions that lead to environmental health, social and cultural well-being and economic robustness. To this end, we seek more opportunities to take part in decision-making processes. We appreciate the value of the economic benefits provided by the public and private forest. We want forest-based economic activities to be competitive and adaptable to changing market demands. At the same time, we want the importance of non-timber economic benefits as well as non-commercial values to be recognized and pursued in Canada's forest, including private woodlots. In particular, we consider forest ecosystem conservation, including a network of protected areas, to be a priority. As well, Canada's forest-based communities demand a role in forest management decisions to ensure that their social, cultural, environmental and economic sustainability is secure.

Aboriginal Peoples, based on their distinct historical and legal positions and their connection to the forest, also want to actively participate in and benefit from forest-related policy and decision-making processes.

In addition, we want those who work in and manage the forest to have the most advanced knowledge and technology and a sound understanding of the forest. We also want forest managers and decision makers to be accountable to the public. A universally accessible national forestry reporting system will help us understand the condition of the forest, whether management is achieving its objectives (including international commitments) and if conservation mechanisms are working effectively.

The application of the National Forest Strategy will vary across Canada and will be based on local social, environmental and economic circumstances.

All of these elements come together under the vision Canadians have for the forest:

The long-term health of Canada's forest will be maintained and enhanced, for the benefit of all living things, and for the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of all Canadians now and in the future.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND

A Forest Nation

For thousands of years, human beings have lived in close association with the forest. Covering nearly half the Canadian landscape, the forest has been and continues to be essential to our environment, our diverse cultural composition and our economy. The forest provides habitat for vegetation and wildlife, it provides clean air and water and contributes to environmental processes (for example, climate moderation and carbon storage) that have an effect around the world. The forest, including private woodlots and the urban forest, is an important source of direct jobs, economic benefits and recreation. It is home to many people, including Aboriginal Peoples.

The forest is not confined to rural or wilderness areas, but is also found within municipal boundaries. Eighty percent of Canadians live in or near the urban forest. This forest is the major connection between them and the forest's environmental benefits and services, such as wind screens, energy reduction in the heating and air conditioning of buildings, air purification, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestering and oxygen production and protection against erosion. As well, this forest connects urban Canadians to other benefits such as recreation, aesthetic enjoyment, increased property values and physical and mental well-being.

Canada's forest figures significantly in the Earth's forest. It represents over 10 percent of the world's forest cover, 25 percent of the world's natural forest, 30 percent of the world's boreal forest and 20 percent of the world's temperate rainforest. Our forest includes some of the world's largest intact forest ecosystems.

Given this unique inheritance, Canada has both local and global responsibilities to sustainably manage its forest. Through international agreements, Canada has assumed a number of responsibilities that will affect the way it manages the forest.

With public input in regional and national fora and received by mail and the Internet, the Canadian forest community, through the National Forest Strategy Coalition, has renewed the National Forest Strategy for a further five years. Through it, Canadians can focus their efforts to achieve the goals and responsibilities of sustainable forest management.

The Path to the National Forest Strategy (1981 - 2003)

For generations, the link between Canada's well-being and its forest has generated concern and interest. Out of this interest and concern, the national forest strategies were developed, beginning in the 1980s. These forest strategies have evolved over time accompanied by new challenges and attitudes and increased knowledge, understanding and participation. Each forest strategy has led to a more concise definition of the sustainable forest, stimulated wider networking and attracted the participation of more members of the forest community. These strategies are:

- *A Forest Sector Strategy for Canada: Discussion Paper, 1981-1987*
- *A National Forest Sector Strategy for Canada (1987-1992)*
- *National Forest Strategy (1992-1998) - Sustainable Forests: A Canadian Commitment*
- *National Forest Strategy (1998-2003) - Sustainable Forests: A Canadian Commitment*

Canada's Forest Framework

Nearly 94 percent of Canada's forest is public land. Six percent is under private ownership. In some parts of Canada, an increasing amount of land is coming under Aboriginal jurisdiction as land issues are settled.

Under the Constitution, the provinces own and regulate the natural resources within their boundaries, with exclusive powers to legislate for the enhancement, conservation and management of forest resources. The federal role in forestry is grounded in its responsibilities for the national economy, trade and international relations, science and technology, the environment, federal lands and parks and Aboriginal matters. The territories now have responsibility for their own resource management.

Aboriginal and treaty rights are primarily exercised in the forest and are constitutionally protected by the *Constitution Act, 1982*. Over the last 25 years, Canadian courts have affirmed Aboriginal and treaty rights. Thus, forest policy and forest management practices have to reflect the constitutional protection afforded Aboriginal and treaty rights. The federal government also has a lead responsibility towards Aboriginal Peoples, including for *Indians and lands reserved for Indians* under section 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*.

Forest resource users are meeting the increasing obligation for sustainable forest management in the managed areas of the publicly owned forest. In addition to the legal framework underlying sustainable forest management practices, markets are having a growing impact on these practices through their demands for forest certification.

Forest issues also remain high on the international agenda. Their resolution is a major challenge because of the magnitude of the land area and the multiplicity of the jurisdictions and interests that are involved. Canada is signatory to international agreements that have a direct bearing on how Canadians manage the forest, such as the *Convention on Biological Diversity*, *Framework Convention on Climate Change*, *Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES) and the Kyoto Protocol. As well, Canada has signed other agreements that have some effect on forest management. These include trade agreements, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) - *Forest Principles*, and the Montreal Process – *Criteria and Indicators of Sustainable Management of Temperate and Boreal Forests*.

In 1985, Canada's federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for forests formed the Canadian Council of Forest Ministers (CCFM). Through addressing national and international issues and stimulating joint initiatives, this voluntary organization coordinates and facilitates cooperative measures that have gradually shaped the overall direction for the sustainable management of Canada's forest. In

doing so, the CCFM has built a legacy of consulting Canadians on the state of the forest and its future. For example, through public consultations, it led the development of three National Forest Strategies, including the creation of the National Forest Strategy Coalition – a collection of governmental and non-governmental bodies – to oversee the implementation of the 1992 and 1998 Strategies.

The leadership for developing this fifth National Forest Strategy (2003-2008), however, came from within the National Forest Strategy Coalition. The broad forest community was once again engaged in dialogue – this time led by the Coalition. The 2003-2008 Strategy confirms Canada's collective commitment to continue to be a global leader in sustainable forest management. This Strategy proposes a vision and challenges all Canadians to implement the actions identified in it.

Canada's Forest Benefits

The forest plays a number of vital ecological roles. It is a biodiversity storehouse, reservoir of carbon, producer of oxygen, filter for clean air and water, moderator of climate and protector against soil erosion. The forest also provides recreational, aesthetic and environmental benefits for rural and urban Canadians. Canada's forest is home to a diversity of plants, animals and micro-organisms. About two-thirds of all species found in Canada live in the forest or depend on forest habitat.

As well, the forest provides socio-economic benefits to all Canadians. The forest is the economic backbone of many rural, remote and forest-based communities across the country. For Aboriginal Peoples across Canada, the forest is fundamental to their traditional cultural, spiritual and material well-being and future self-sufficiency. The wood and paper products industries are major contributors to Canada's standard of living. These industries employ over 350 000 Canadians directly and over 770 000 indirectly. They generate over \$58 billion in total sales annually, making a net contribution of \$34 billion – more than half of the country's annual trade surplus. Even though forest exports from other nations are rising, Canada continues to be the world's largest exporter of forest products.

Canada's forest also provides the required environment for sustainable resource use, such as timber production, as well as a wide range of internationally important non-timber products and activities such as recreation, tourism, hunting, fishing, trapping, Christmas trees, mushrooms, medicinal plants and maple products.

SECTION 2: STRATEGIC THEMES

The National Forest Strategy focuses on the following broad themes:

- 1. Ecosystem-based Management**
- 2. Sustainable Forest Communities**
- 3. Rights and Participation of Aboriginal Peoples**
- 4. Forest Products Benefits**
- 5. Knowledge and Innovation for Competitiveness and Sustainability**
- 6. The Urban Forest and Public Engagement in Sustainability**
- 7. Private Woodlots' Contribution to Sustainability**
- 8. Reporting and Accountability**

1. Ecosystem-based Management

An ecosystem-based approach to managing our natural resources recognizes that the social and economic benefits the forest provides over the long term rests on the ecological integrity of the forest. Forest management policies in Canada are based on this philosophy, as are many forest-related international commitments. The United Nations Forum on Forests has identified the ecosystem-based approach to sustainable forest management as a priority.

Essential to an ecosystem-based approach is the establishment and management of protected areas. These contribute to the conservation of biological diversity. However, protected areas must be complemented by sound stewardship across the entire country, accompanied by particular attention to lands around protected areas.

Ecological functions and processes must be understood, maintained and restored where necessary. Maintaining productive capacity, resilience and biological diversity are key factors in ensuring a healthy forest ecosystem. In turn, a healthy ecosystem is essential for a healthy society and economy. Thus, an ecosystem-based approach needs to reflect the fundamental connection of people to the ecosystem.

Forest management considers all the benefits the forest can provide, whether these are direct benefits, such as wood, water, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, recreation, hunting, trapping, fish habitat, fishing or wildfoods, or indirect benefits, such as the beauty of the forest landscape or the satisfaction that society derives from its forest. Management also considers human and natural disturbances such as fire, insects and disease when making choices to optimize forest use over time. Managing the forest to encompass this wide spectrum of benefits is complex because they often conflict.

Ecosystem-based management, therefore, considers non-timber and timber benefits along with other social and economic benefits, while also incorporating the best available scientific and traditional knowledge.

Objective 1:

Manage Canada's natural forest using an ecosystem-based approach that maintains forest health, structure, functions, composition and biodiversity, and includes, but is not limited to:

- a) Using integrated land-use planning, especially before tenure allocation;
- b) Maintaining natural forested ecosystems;
- c) Completing a system of representative protected areas;
- d) On a national basis, maintaining carbon reservoirs and managing the forest to be a net

- carbon sink, over the long term; and
- e) Conserving old-growth forests and threatened forest ecosystems.

Action Items

- 1.1 Develop guidelines for integrating watershed-based management and wildlife habitat conservation into forest management practices across Canada and measures for evaluating implementation.*
- 1.2 Establish a process involving forest-based communities leading to the implementation of land-use management plans, which include all forest benefits.*
- 1.3 Implement systems and decision making that sets resource-use levels (for example, the Allowable Annual Cut - AAC) as an output of a planning process.*
- 1.4 Develop a better understanding of the effects of climate change and the Kyoto Protocol commitments on the forest ecosystem and incorporate these into forest policy and forest management planning.*
- 1.5 Reforest areas that are cut for temporary uses and use afforestation, where feasible, to mitigate the permanent loss of forest.*
- 1.6. Fulfill existing commitments to complete the network of representative protected areas in each province and territory.*
- 1.7 Evaluate the full range of advantages and disadvantages of Intensive Forest Management across Canada.*
- 1.8 Manage to avoid or mitigate the adverse impact of invasive species on our forest ecosystems.*
- 1.9 Increase the use of Integrated Pest Management approaches to gradually reduce the use of synthetic, chemical pesticides in forest management.*
- 1.10 Redirect, where appropriate, harvesting into forest areas affected by forest fire, pests and disease damage to mitigate loss.*

2. Sustainable Forest Communities

In 2000, nearly 300 communities, described as being “heavily forest-dependent”, had at least 50 percent of their employment base in the industrial forest sector. As well, more than 800 Aboriginal communities are located within Canada’s productive forest. Many of these communities continue to depend on the forest for traditional, non-economic uses. All forest-dependent communities, however, rely on the forest not only for their economic well-being, but also for their environmental and social well-being – in some cases, even for their survival.

Traditionally, the forest industry’s processing facilities have been built in rural or remote areas close to the fibre source. However, this is changing. Communities have been affected by a shift in the way forest resources are used. For example, expanded access to remote forest areas, efficient mechanized harvesting and transport and large tenure allocations have reduced the number of jobs per unit of wood harvested and concentrated forestry support services in larger and fewer regional centres.

The heavy dependency of forest-based communities on the forest as a source of employment and revenue has created economic challenges in many areas of Canada. Simple proximity to the forest and forest industry jobs does not necessarily lead to community sustainability and meaningful participation in the forest economy. The ability of forest-based communities to participate in resource and land management decision-making processes and in the development of new economic opportunities that will improve their future, is essential to ensure community sustainability.

Despite increasing community involvement in forest management planning in recent years, involvement in decision making and implementation needs to be improved. This is especially important because the future of rural regions and Aboriginal Peoples is linked not only to a timber-based forest economy, but also to the use of non-timber forest products and other forest uses such as trapping, traditional uses, tourism and recreation.

Objective 2:

Develop legislation and policies to improve the sustainability (social, environmental and economic) of forest-based communities by:

- a) Fostering participation and involvement in forest management decision making;
- b) Improving access to resources;
- c) Sharing benefits;
- d) Enhancing multiple benefits; and
- e) Supporting community resilience and adaptive capacity.

Action Items

- 2.1 Develop and adapt forest legislation and policies to provide involvement of forest-based communities in sustainable forest management decision making and implementation.*
- 2.2 Expand the area and use of community-based tenure systems and resource allocation models in remote, rural regions of Canada to increase benefits to Aboriginal Peoples and forest-based communities.*
- 2.3 Support capacity building in local communities so that they can effectively participate in processes that lead to community sustainability.*
- 2.4 Develop assessment and decision-support systems to enhance the socio-economic health of forest-based communities.*

3. Rights and Participation of Aboriginal Peoples

Aboriginal Peoples' involvement in sustainable forest management continues to increase, shaped by several concurrent factors, including various international commitments, court rulings on accommodating such rights, as well as policies and practices ensuring benefits to Aboriginal communities. These recognize the historical and fundamental connection of many Aboriginal Peoples to forest ecosystems. Land claims, treaty-making and treaty land entitlement are three ongoing processes through which Aboriginal interest in the land is acknowledged formally, resulting in an Aboriginal-controlled land base. Meaningful Aboriginal participation in forest management necessitates goodwill and foresight on the part of the entire forest community.

Although courts have provided direction on certain issues, Aboriginal Peoples and governments in Canada have different views on the scope and nature of Aboriginal and treaty rights and how they should be applied generally to forest management policies and practices. This difference in perspectives creates a sense of economic and legal uncertainty in the forest sector. A shared understanding of Aboriginal and treaty rights, how they can be accommodated in forest management and how this affects roles and responsibilities, is essential in order to achieve the clarity and relative stability sought by all parties in the forest sector.

In addition to the direction provided by Canadian courts, several international conventions, declarations and ongoing policy fora are directly relevant to the involvement of Aboriginal Peoples in sustainable forest management. These include, for example, the *Convention on Biological Diversity*, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) - *Forest Principles* and the *Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Their spirit and intent will influence sustainable forest management policies and initiatives in Canada.

Aboriginal participation in the forest sector has generally increased in recent years. Opportunities for employment, contracting and business development are more abundant, with the forest industry willing to enter into various forms of partnership. However, the lack of technical, human and financial resources and the lack of appropriate policy frameworks make it difficult for Aboriginal Peoples to participate in forest management and forest-based economic activities. Effective participation also calls for innovative and bold institutional arrangements between governments and Aboriginal communities relating to forest management. To support more effective participation, forest management planning and decision-making processes need to include women and youth as well as Aboriginal cultural and traditional approaches to land use.

Objective 3:

Accommodate Aboriginal and treaty rights in the sustainable use of the forest recognizing the historical and legal position of Aboriginal Peoples and their fundamental connection to ecosystems.

Action Items

- 3.1 *Initiate processes with Aboriginal Peoples and appropriate levels of government for establishing:*
 - *a shared and grounded understanding of Aboriginal rights, Aboriginal title and treaty rights;*
 - *the roles and responsibilities of Aboriginal Peoples, governments and forest stakeholders; and,*
 - *measures to fulfill governmental fiduciary responsibilities and the legal duty to consult.*
- 3.2 *Implement institutional arrangements between Aboriginal Peoples and governments that reflect a spirit of sharing responsibilities and benefits for the management, conservation and sustainable use of forest lands and resources; and give effect to land claim settlements, treaties and formal agreements on forest resource use and management.*
- 3.3 *Incorporate traditional knowledge in managing forest lands and resources in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity.*
- 3.4 *Direct federal and other available funding to support Aboriginal capacity building and participation in implementing the National Forest Strategy, through measures such as a renewed and expanded First Nation Forestry Program and the development of a parallel Métis forestry program, and in supporting Aboriginal participation in related local, regional and international meetings.*
- 3.5 *Provide for access to a fair share of benefits from the use of forest lands and resources.*
- 3.6 *Provide for Aboriginal interests in the development of international trade agreements.*
- 3.7 *Review and update the status of forest inventories and management plans of Indian Reserve forest areas and identify resources to implement these plans.*

4. Forest Products Benefits

In addition to ecological services, Canada's forest supports a wide range of benefits such as timber, recreation, numerous non-timber products and service-based industries that are important both nationally and internationally. Over the last decade, exports of non-timber products and value-added products (for example, engineered wood products or wood veneer panels) have increased more than have exports of traditional wood and paper products.

Canada is the world's largest forest products exporter, accounting for over 20 percent of the global market in 2001. Canada's future share of the international forest products market and the competitiveness of its forest industry will depend on its ability to adapt to changes in domestic and international markets at a time when the forest is increasingly expected to be managed for uses other than timber production.

Canada's success in producing and marketing forest products and its closeness to the U.S. market have provided excellent economic opportunities. These advantages will continue to supply good jobs and investment income for thousands of Canadians. However, regulatory barriers and new global competition from lower-cost fibre sources present new challenges for the forest industry. Addressing these challenges requires continuous improvements in new product development, market diversification, cost competitiveness, quality enhancement, worker retraining and public reporting. Opportunities, nevertheless, exist to increase products and services while using less wood and less land.

Changing values have underlined the need to collaborate in communicating information about Canadian forest practices. The industry's commitment to sustainable forest management must be demonstrated to both Canadian and international communities.

Objective 4:

Stimulate the diversification of markets, forest products and services and benefits (both timber and non-timber) by:

- a) Understanding current and emerging markets and developing new domestic and international markets;
- b) Promoting value-added and best end-use through expanded research and design; and
- c) Attracting manufacturers of finished products and promoting markets for forest environmental services.

Action Items

- 4.1 Create and maintain policies and programs that encourage human capacity, investment, productivity, innovation and competitiveness in:
- existing and potential primary and value-added timber industries;*

- *non-timber and service-based industries, such as tourism and recreation, hunting and fishing, trapping and wildfoods; and*
 - *specialty forest products and services; for example, medicinal plants, ethno-botanicals, carbon sinks, water regeneration, bioplastics and nutraceuticals.*
- 4.2 *Create and maintain policies and programs that encourage, develop and maintain access to markets for primary and value-added timber and non-timber based industries; for example, promote Canadian forest products and practices at home and abroad through public events, market initiatives, world-class environmental programs and community activities.*
- 4.3 *Develop strategies for increasing domestic and export markets.*
- 4.4 *Develop value-added industries and programs to support innovation, for example, financial investment in intermediate and final product manufacturing, and collect statistics to monitor their development.*
- 4.5 *Remove policy barriers and encourage the greater use of renewable forest products to improve resource and energy efficiency.*

5. Knowledge and Innovation for Competitiveness and Sustainability

The Canadian forest sector has an impressive history of using innovative practices and new technologies that have advanced many aspects of forest management and captured a significant share of the global forest product market. We have a fundamental responsibility to ensure the continued health of Canada's forest through science and technology (S&T) and by applying the best available knowledge. Future success lies in embracing a more knowledge-centred, innovation-based approach that encompasses forest tree genetics to forest products markets. Canadian forest S&T groups are working to maintain and develop the necessary infrastructure and intellectual capacity to do so. At the same time, these groups are striving to progress from individual effort to partnerships and networks in order to use available resources more efficiently. Research is increasingly structured so that experts from diverse disciplines can work together. There is also a growing appreciation for the importance and value of traditional scientific knowledge found in Aboriginal and local communities, and for the need to integrate this with current scientific knowledge. Canada's progress in sustainable forest management requires integrated approaches and multidisciplinary research partnerships and networks that incorporate the natural and social sciences and traditional knowledge.

Achieving the National Forest Strategy's objectives requires understanding how knowledge, from tree seed to markets, is generated and translated into new products, processes and services. Technology, public awareness, social responsibility and environmental standards have changed considerably in the last ten years. Canada's highly skilled workforce (from field personnel to policy makers) is responsible for Canada's leading presence in global markets. The workforce must be equipped with the knowledge and the ability to adapt to change by fostering a culture of innovation, learning and knowledge management. This requires a continuing commitment and stable funding for research and development by all partners and to applying the best available knowledge to decision making. To remain competitive and to meet the evolving expectations of forest stewardship, the forest community needs to quicken the pace of innovation.

Objective 5:

Maintain and enhance the skills and knowledge of forest practitioners and mobilize the broader Canadian knowledge community to establish a new forest innovation agenda for Canada by:

- a) Developing "clusters" of forest sector S&T cooperation, both nationally and regionally, to use available S&T resources more efficiently and effectively;
- b) Supporting innovative post-secondary education institutions, continuing education and technology transfer to ensure that the principles of adaptive management improve the management of our resources;
- c) Improving the processes for bringing new and traditional knowledge and ideas to policy evolution, decision making and field practices; and
- d) Informing investors about opportunities for innovative uses of renewable forest materials and services in relation to the Kyoto Protocol.

Action items

- 5.1 Integrate individual S&T efforts into innovation networks.*
- 5.2 Develop a framework to use traditional knowledge along with current scientific knowledge and to protect the intellectual property rights of Aboriginal Peoples.*
- 5.3 Develop strategies for improving the forest sector's success in competing for funding to support leading-edge S&T programs, using research and development, tax credits, research extension and education.*
- 5.4 Develop and implement more focussed education and training for practitioners involved in growing, harvesting and producing specialty wood products through:*
 - enriched secondary and post-secondary education curricula;*
 - extension services;*
 - adaptive management;*
 - demonstration projects and outdoor classrooms; and*
 - continuing education.*
- 5.5 Establish formal mechanisms for forest managers and policy makers to communicate their needs to the S&T community and vice versa.*

6. The Urban Forest and Public Engagement in Sustainability

For the vast majority of Canadians living in large urban areas, the urban forest is their contact to the forest's benefits and values. The urban forest provides many tangible and intangible social, spiritual, cultural, environmental and economic benefits. In many cases, it defines our communities, neighbourhoods and cities. Trees can increase residential property values, can attract industry and tourists, provide wildlife habitat and provide jobs for city foresters, technicians, planners, arborists and others. The improvement of Canadians' quality of life and the psychological benefits of treed landscapes have been well documented. Also well-documented is the effect of trees on reducing the energy needed to heat and cool buildings. Urban Canadians' perception of the forest surrounding their towns and cities will often shape their views on the entire forest, whether it is in their backyard or across the country.

The forest in rural areas affects people living in towns and cities because of its contribution to the economy, its environmental functions (for example, in cleansing groundwater and regulating water flows) and its recreational opportunities. All the while, people living in urban areas are increasingly shaping forest policies by their participation in decision making at local, regional and national levels.

A key element in fostering educated debates and making sound decisions is credible information. Canadians care about the forest and want to be informed about the state of the forest and the social and spiritual well-being, environmental health and economic wealth that results from both forest use and conservation. Whether living in an urban centre or a rural forest-based community, Canadians benefit from greater access to, and availability of, accurate, timely information on the forest. Sharing information in an open and transparent manner is a critical part of generating trust and understanding between the public and the various interests that compose the forest community. Engaging young Canadians, in particular, and encouraging the exchange of perspectives on the forest in various public meetings, is recommended.

Working together, the forest community will reach out to Canadians wherever they live to share forest knowledge. The more Canadians know about the forest, the better they will be able to conserve and use it for the benefit of present and future generations.

Objective 6:

Actively engage Canadians in sustaining the diversity of benefits underlying the importance of Canada's forest by:

- a) Establishing mechanisms to advance the planning, maintenance and management of the urban forest based on an ecosystem-based approach; and
- b) Enhancing communication and outreach programs.

Action Items

- 6.1 *Develop and implement a national urban forestry strategy.*
- 6.2 *Develop guidelines and support tools to help municipalities maintain and enhance their urban forest.*
- 6.3 *Develop guidelines and support tools to protect the surrounding forest and watersheds from urban pollution.*
- 6.4 *Establish research priorities for urban forestry in Canada and explore funding mechanisms to implement these priorities.*

- 6.5 *Develop and implement a communications strategy to inform the public about how the forest contributes to their quality of life.*
- 6.6 *Develop educational initiatives and programs that will inform youth about forest stewardship and engage them in local forest stewardship programs.*
- 6.7 *Identify unique and threatened habitats in and near large and small municipalities and develop and implement strategies to ensure their conservation.*

7. Private Woodlots' Contribution to Sustainability

Six percent of Canada's forest is owned by 425 000 woodlot-owning families. Woodlots are often the forest most Canadians see, because they are a common feature on the southern Canadian landscape. Woodlots are also an important source of raw material for the forest industry. The income generated from producing pulpwood, sawlogs and other forest products is an important source of economic stability for many rural communities. As well as economic benefits, woodlots provide recreational opportunities, wildlife habitat and biodiversity, clean water and pleasant roadside scenery across rural Canada. In some areas, woodlots may be all that is left of the original forested ecosystem.

The multi-faceted contribution of private woodlots to Canadian society is the result of good stewardship carried down through generations of many woodlot-owning families. These families have been guided by their own "land-ethic", by market opportunities and by supportive government policies and programs, including forest extension services. However, a delicate balance exists between sustainable management of woodlots and the short-term financial viability of woodlot-based family businesses. Financial pressures sometimes build to a point where poor forestry practices result, such as over harvesting and deforestation. These problems have been increasing in parts of Canada in recent years. At the same time, Canadians have rising expectations about acceptable management practices. Indeed, woodlot owners are subject to an accelerating pace of change in markets, production technology, management practices and obligations to society. There is a growing need for reliable information and educational services, both of which are vital tools for coping in an environment of constant change.

With appropriate incentives, these problems can be overcome. More owners will be encouraged to strengthen their commitment to good stewardship, which in turn will increase the flow of products and services from woodlots. The challenge for Canadian society is to ensure that a comprehensive framework of policies and services is in place and is available to all owners.

The framework would include conventional incentives through the marketplace, the tax system and silviculture assistance programs. Fair access to markets is needed as are government policies that could help offset market pressures. Adequate funding is needed for silviculture programs. Positive incentives in the tax system need to replace disincentives to sustainable forest management. The framework would also include new forms of incentives to compensate for the cost of providing environmental services, such as maintaining watershed health and clean water, wildlife habitat and other services. Another component of the framework would include educational services. They are vitally important in ensuring that owners have access to the information, skills, technology and the assistance with planning needed to take full advantage of available financial incentives. As woodlot owners begin to respond to the challenge of forest certification, the importance of these services increases.

Stronger partnerships among woodlot owners, their associations, governments, industry and other agencies are instrumental in making progress toward these goals.

Objective 7:

Increase the economic, social and environmental contribution by Canadian woodlot owners to Canadian society through a concerted effort by stakeholders to strengthen policies and services that encourage and support viable woodlot businesses.

Action Items

7.1 Identify and remove obstacles hindering sustainable development with particular attention to market incentives, silvicultural programs and tax policies.

7.2 Increase the capacity of private woodlot owners by expanding extension programs.

7.3 Develop and implement incentives for the provision of environmental services from private woodlots.

7.4 Hold a private woodlot owners' National Forum to review progress across the country in the design and implementation of policies, incentives and programs to support private woodlot owners in the following areas:

- extension, training and technology transfer;*
- taxation (income and property);*
- forest renewal;*
- environmental services;*
- natural disasters;*
- certification;*
- fairness in access to markets and stumpage policies; and*
- carbon pooling.*

8. Reporting and Accountability

Sound, credible information is essential not only for knowledgeable decision making, but also for reporting at all levels. However, reporting and accountability are significantly challenged by the ability of any one organization to efficiently collect, compile, analyse, synthesize and publish information, and by the speed with which both forest-related information and public expectations have expanded. From an information perspective, tremendous changes in technology (for example, better remote sensing material and improved computerized tools) have taken place in the last ten years. At the same time, the evolution of more powerful computers, farther-reaching information networks and the internationalization of the debate on the forest have rapidly increased the number and range of reporting requirements that Canada must comply with. Forest data and information are currently generated from a vast range of sources. The resulting information often varies in scope, nature, format and volume.

Canada needs a standardized national system that provides information on the current state of its forest and forest change over time. The CCFM has agreed to develop an improved information system. This initiative includes establishing infrastructure and data-sharing agreements with interested parties to facilitate accessible, integrated analysis and reporting.

Improved databases and availability of information will help influence the quality of reporting, communicate the value of the forest and promote the accountability of all those involved in the forest sector.

Objective 8:

Create a comprehensive national forest reporting system that consolidates data, information and knowledge for all valued features of the forest, both urban and rural.

Action Items

8.1 *Establish capacity for credible and authoritative reporting to the public on:*

- *legal reporting requirements;*
- *how management practices incorporate multiple values;*
- *criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management;*
- *Aboriginal involvement in the forest sector;*
- *honouring international commitments such as those under the Convention on Biological Diversity; and*
- *actions pursuant to recommendations of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the United Nations Forum on Forests and other forest-related international meetings.*

8.2 *Assess socio-economic and environmental impact analysis of policy and management options.*

8.3 *Institute forest data standards for forest inventories, including monitoring protocols, to*

create a publicly accessible forest information system that provides high-quality information on the status of the forest.

8.4 *Enhance programs to monitor and inform the public about invasive species.*

8.5 *Establish a consolidated reporting system that satisfies Canada's objectives and obligations related to conventions and policy initiatives such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Forum on Forests and those related to the CCFM Criteria and Indicators Framework as well as the National Forest Strategy.*

SECTION 3: PARTNERSHIP FOR IMPLEMENTATION

This Strategy provides the vision and the goals that Canadians have for their forest over the next five years. It confirms Canada's collective commitment to continue to be a global leader in sustainable forest management.

Building on a consensus to work cooperatively toward this vision and commitment, governmental and non-governmental organizations formed a National Forest Strategy Coalition at Canada's 9th National Forest Congress, held in Ottawa on May 1-2, 2003. Members of this Coalition are signatories of the Canada Forest Accord. The Coalition was given the task to provide leadership for implementing the Strategy across Canada. To do this, the Coalition has defined a three-step approach:

- I) A National Forest Strategy Steering Committee composed of Accord signatories will be established to oversee the planning, implementation, communications and reporting on the National Forest Strategy. A tracking and management system will be created to do this.

- II) The National Forest Strategy Steering Committee will engage Forest Champions to lead each of the Strategy's themes. They will promote the collective implementation of their theme and they will:
 - Stimulate and maintain a high level of participation within their network of Accord signatories and with other networks;
 - Develop a work program with the cooperation of signatories and others;
 - Track and report on collective progress to the National Forest Strategy Steering Committee; and
 - Provide advice on priorities, assessments and communications to the National Forest Strategy Steering Committee.

- III) All signatories to the Accord will strive to adopt the operating principles of this Strategy in a way that is appropriate to their individual circumstances and capabilities. They will be called upon to contribute financially and in-kind, report regularly on progress and encourage others to become involved.