



NOVA
FOREST
ALLIANCE

Spring 2009

Growing Ideas

Your Community and the Nova Forest Alliance - Partnering for Prosperity

The Nova Forest Alliance is a partnership of progressive organizations that assembled over ten years ago to form a model forest (one of several that are located across Canada). We are groups and individuals in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island that have a stake in the prosperity of our forest communities. We are landowners, woodland managers, researchers, foresters, technicians, educators, environmentalists, salmon fishers, wilderness conservators, Christmas tree growers, forest contractors, silviculture workers, lumber and pulp mill managers, First Nations leaders, and many others.

Our partners have been working together to find solutions to recent changes in the forest industry and helping communities look at alternatives to traditional practices. We have been working since 1998 with generous support from the Canadian Forest Service, many other federal, provincial and municipal governments and our own partners. In 2007, we were pleased with the

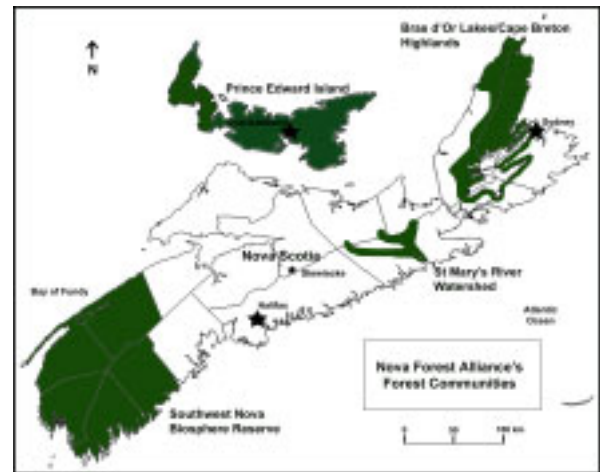
success of our application to the Forest Communities Program. Under this program, we are partnering with four very diverse forest communities in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, enabling us to support people who are making a difference in your community.

The Canadian forest industry is changing. Faced with challenges such as shrinking markets for traditional wood products, a fluctuating currency and aging rural populations, communities are working together to provide local solutions. Now, more than ever, communities must explore their strengths and utilize them well. By bringing people together, the Nova Forest Alliance is creating real potential for positive change.

In this newsletter we introduce you to people and organizations who are leading initiatives in four areas of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. These are examples of communities that are adapting to change, seeking local solutions and addressing

issues that are impacting the social and economic fabric of our rural landscape. These communities could be almost anywhere in Canada, but they are *your* communities.

At Nova Forest Alliance, we're finding answers to important questions and making a difference - together.



What are we doing in 2009?

This year the Nova Forest Alliance and Forest Communities Program will support projects that: *foster the exchange of ecological knowledge among First Nations youth - maximize the community benefits of the hardwood resource on Cape Breton Island - explore the potential for new hardwood markets - encourage sustainable natural resource management - capitalize on non-timber, value added and other emerging forest-based opportunities - expand the range of knowledge and options available to woodlot owners - develop an integrated watershed management plan - engage the public, industry and special interest groups- develop and publish a natural history book - develop a plan for demonstrating historical forestry practices - create a network to empower youth leaders - educate landowners about agroforestry opportunities- promote awareness about natural and cultural history - exchange ideas with model forests in Canada and around the world - contribute to the completion of Nova Scotia's protected areas network.*

Partnership Activities of the Nova Forest Alliance and St. Mary's River Association

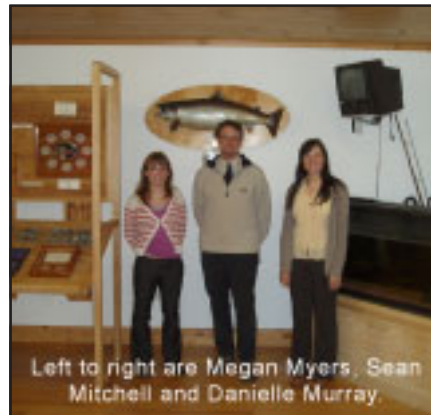
In June 2008, the St. Mary's River Association (SMRA) formally began an ambitious, comprehensive restoration and resource management initiative within the St. Mary's River. Titled "*Healthy River, Vibrant Communities*" the goal is to "*Restore the ecological integrity of the St. Mary's River watershed to the benefit of the natural environment and the people that live and work within the drainage*". One of the key aspects to this initiative, reflected in both the title and the goal, is the explicit recognition of the role people play within the watershed and that they must be players in any restoration or management initiatives. Recognizing this, the SMRA has embarked on four major projects with a focus of public participation: (1) Public engagement, (2) Development of an outdoor recreational management plan, (3) Development of a St. Mary's River-specific Atlantic salmon recovery strategy, and (4) Development of a book on the natural and human history of the St. Mary's River.

Key to any effective planning or large-scale restoration is clear communication with residents and stakeholders; these are the people whom any planning will affect. It is critical that a developed plan reflect the wishes of the local people. To achieve this the SMRA, with funding support from the NFA, will be initiating a "public engagement" campaign over the next few months in which we will be trying to contact as many individuals or interest groups within the watershed as we can to provide them with information on SMRA planning initiatives, as relevant to them, and asking about their concerns and thoughts about where management within the watershed should be heading. Ultimately, we are trying to craft a "vision" for the river, watershed and communities that all or most people agree with. Our philosophy at the SMRA is that the St. Mary's River watershed is a "working landscape", we can benefit from it economically, socially, recreationally, and aesthetically, but community based planning is essential to allow us to achieve all of these benefits. We hope that the residents of the St. Mary's River watershed agree with us on this point and will provide us with feedback on their values, concerns and comments about this watershed.

The St. Mary's River watershed is a rural environment with low population density. It has tremendous potential for outdoor recreational opportunities, and for capitalizing on economic opportunities provided by these. A recreational planner (Mr. Peter Dowd) has been hired by the SMRA, through funding from the NFA, to explore options, and identify current uses and opportunities for outdoor recreation in the watershed. Mr. Dowd has been contacting recreational users and the public, and consulting with recreational agencies in developing this plan. We expect that this work

will provide options and identify potential future opportunities to increase the outdoor recreational activities within the watershed, to both the personal and economic benefit of the residents.

The Atlantic salmon has long been important to the anglers, the social structure, the economics, and the heritage and culture of the people of the St. Mary's River watershed. This has prompted the SMRA to initiate a watershed-scale Atlantic Salmon Recovery Strategy. A researcher (Ms. Danielle Murray) has been hired, through funding provided by Service Canada-Career Focus, to develop this strategy. She will be seeking public input on the values and importance that residents place on the Atlantic salmon and the salmon fishery in the St. Mary's as part of her work. We recognize that for any local or watershed scale recovery strategy to work well requires "buy-in" from the people of the watershed. Without that, any imposed plan is unlikely to succeed. We hope that the resulting roadmap of her plan will result in the river being a famous destination in the near future, for anglers after the king of fish.



Left to right are Megan Myers, Sean Mitchell and Danielle Murray

Recognizing the natural beauty of the St. Mary's River, as well as the intricate history of the area and its people, the SMRA has initiated the development of a book on the natural history of the St. Mary's River watershed. The focus of the book is to be the relationship of people with the landscape of the St. Mary's River and how that has changed over historical time. A researcher (Mr. Duncan Pulsifer) has been hired to facilitate the early stages of this book development, with funding supplied by the NFA. Mr. Pulsifer will be working to identify, collect, and organize information and

resources for inclusion within the book; this process will include asking the public for their input, stories, and accounts. It is our hope that this book will provide a comprehensive and enlightening account of the rich history of the watershed, its people, and the consistently changing relationship between the two.

These projects – salmon recovery, recreational opportunities, book about human relationships with the landscape – are intimately connected. They are tied together by the common thread of public participation. We hope that as these projects develop, and members of the public become increasingly aware of the activities of the SMRA they will engage with these works.

For more information on the *Healthy River, Vibrant Communities* initiative, these described projects, or the role of the NFA in the St. Mary's River, please contact:

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Box 179, Sherbrooke, NS B0J 3C0 ~ ph.(902) 522-2099 ~ fax (902) 522-2241 ~ email: smitchel@stfx.ca

PEI Model Forest & PEI Woodland Owners Partner for Sustainability

In February, 2007, landowners of Prince County, Prince Edward Island, went to the Richmond Community Centre to hear about a new project that proposed to help them grow healthier, sustainable forests for themselves and future generations. At that gathering, they were introduced to “Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities”, a landscape-level pilot project being undertaken in the Richmond/Northam/Arlington area.

Organizers of the event were looking for interested landowners who would be willing to help them develop and demonstrate forest management techniques which will not only be sustainable, but will increase landowners’ income from both timber and non-timber forest products, goods and services. Landowners were interested and the positive results lead to yet another meeting in April.

The “Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities” pilot project is well underway on the defined study area in Prince County, but the results of the project will benefit landowners in PEI and other provinces. The project has demonstrated that local involvement in planning, together with outside expertise, can result in renewed interest in many aspects of woodlands and their management. Forest renewal, environmental issues, non-traditional woodland products and general woodland education have been discussed and the local communities are taking concrete steps to realize advances in these areas.

There are many components to the program but the primary objectives are to

- develop and demonstrate techniques which will enhance

revenue for all PEI woodlot owners

- provide forest education and experiential learning for people of all ages, and
- strengthen local forest groups.

Since it began, program participants have heard speakers provide information on a variety of topics, including landscape planning, value-added products and woodlot management from a landowner/business owner’s perspective, creating and using a management plan, forest management services and incentives available to woodlot owners through the province’s Forest Enhancement Program. Landowners have also participated in forestry days, seminars, tours and surveys. As the project moves forward, further opportunities for demonstration and education will be offered.



“Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities” is sponsored in part by the Prince Edward Island Model Forest Network Partnership, through support from the Forest Communities Program of Natural Resources Canada and the Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry. The project is also actively supported by several groups who are working tirelessly to bring sustainable practices to landowners, including Wood Products PEI and Wood West Network Initiative.

This project is just one of many being undertaken by the PEI Model Forest Partnership Network and organizations who are supporting owner-driven sustainable forest management on the Island. For more information contact Steve DeWolfe at info@peiforests.ca or visit the website www.peiforests.ca.

MTRI Butterfly Garden

Last summer, students from Clarke Rutherford school in Digby County provided volunteers at MTRI with instructions on how to make a butterfly garden. With soil donated by the Van Dyk family of Caledonia, and plants raised by organic farmers Gilbert Doelle in Digby County and Cindy Rubinfine in Pleasant River, MTRI’s garden grew and even attracted the rare Monarch Butterfly, what a success! A butterfly garden with native swamp milkweed plants (needed by Monarch butterflies) was also planted at the Van Dyk Blueberry Juice Plant in West Caledonia and plans are underway to get more butterfly habitat planted around the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve this summer. Keep an eye out at your local farm markets for the MTRI Butterfly Club.



Preserving a Shared Past: Fortress of Louisbourg - Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources Project

The north shore of the Fortress of Louisbourg National Park site contains the remnants of an 18th century French *habitant pecheur* occupation. The area was later colonized in the 19th century and became known as "Old Town", which has its own history and values within the local community.

The presence and growth of white spruce and alder along the north shore of the Fortress of Louisbourg National Historic Site (FOLNHS) threatens the integrity of the *in situ* cultural resources. Expanding root structures displace artifacts while the threat of blow down of the mature conifers has potential to negatively impact the archaeological resources that lie just beneath the ground surface. The growth of spruce trees also contributes to the loss of cultural landscapes and view of the Fortress.

The Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources Forestry Division has been contracted to remove the white spruce and alder from the north shore area. The UINR represents the five Mi'kmaq

communities of Unama'ki and was formed to address First Nation's concerns regarding natural resources and their sustainability. It represents Cape Breton's First Nations' voice on natural resources and environmental concerns.

The purpose of this contract is to remove the trees that currently threaten the integrity of the *in situ* cultural resources in a manner that does not adversely impact on the resources.

During the harvesting operation it is essential to ensure resources located just below the ground surface are not disturbed. In some cases the historic artifacts lie only inches beneath the sod layer. An environmental assessment has been completed for this project and forms part of this contract.

Due to the fragility of the *in situ* resources, the forestry operation must be of extremely low impact. Thus, standard commercial mechanized forestry equipment is not appropriate for this project, as the weight of machinery will cause damage to the cultural resources. Power saws are being used for felling and a small tracked forwarder is being used to extract the merchantable timber.



Left to right are Annie Johnson, Blair Bernard, Mark MacPhail, Cheryl Berube

Why Consider a Management Plan for Your Woodlot?

If you have been an inactive woodlot owner, you may be sitting on an untapped resource that can provide benefits to you and future generations. Even if you are a more active landowner and have been managing your woodlot without a plan, you will find that working from a management plan puts you in the driver's seat and provides a long-term vision to guide you when making decisions about your woodlot. It provides access to experienced, professional advice that will help you accomplish your objectives.

A woodlot management plan is simply a *plan of action based on the woodlot owner's objectives*. It is an invaluable

tool to you, the landowner, whether you see your woodlot as a source of income, a refuge for wildlife or a place for personal recreation and enjoyment. Benefits can include enhancement of natural beauty and landscape values, reduction of soil erosion and improvements to water quality, protection from wildfire, insects and disease damage.

Woodlot owners with forest management plans registered with the PEI Department of Environment, Energy and Forestry are eligible to receive funding incentives through the Province's Forest Enhancement Program to help them offset some of the costs associated with completing certain forest treatments in their woodlots.

Contacts - Prince Edward Island
If you would like to find information on **forest management plans** and the Province's **Forest Enhancement Program**, you can visit www.gov.pe.ca/go/fep. You can also contact Scott MacDonald at (902) 368-4700 or samacdonald@gov.pe.ca.

If you live or own land in the Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities study area in **Richmond/Northam/Arlington** area and are interested in having a **management plan** prepared for your woodlot, contact Steve DeWolfe at (902) 368-4803 or info@peiforests.ca.

If you would like to read more about other programs being delivered by the **Prince Edward Island Model Forest Network** you can visit their website at www.peiforests.ca.

Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute

The Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute is a charitable co-operative that promotes sustainable resource use through research and education. MTRI operates a field station in Kempt, Queens County near Kejimikujik and the Tobeatic. Some of MTRI's most popular outreach events are its annual October woodlot demonstration, monthly winter public talks, and weekly summer seminars. MTRI helps to co-ordinate volunteers and students who research and monitor endangered species, aquatic health, and forests. Over the last few years, the organization has been developing capacity through its staff, volunteers, members, and directors to successfully deliver on a number of conservation projects that are described at www.merseytobeatic.ca.

In partnership with NFA and others in the Southwest Nova Biosphere Reserve, MTRI is working on three Forest Communities Projects this spring and summer. MTRI will: help to co-ordinate a network of high school students who will work on leadership skills in rural communities; promote agroforestry by hosting education and training events, and provide education and outreach about natural and cultural history in the biosphere reserve.



The MTRI staff team this winter from left to right:

Kyle Rowter works with private woodlot owners interested in restoration and improving wildlife habitat, Wendy Whynot is the Office Manager who keeps things running smoothly at the field station, Crystal Doggett is the Species at Risk Co-ordinator, Amanda Lavers is the Executive Director who co-ordinates and develops MTRI's research and education programs, and Alain Belliveau works with volunteers to research flying squirrels, old forests, and forest management. The little guy to the far right didn't last very long but kept the team's spirits up while he was at MTRI :)



NewPage Open House

As the Woodlands Unit at NewPage Port Hawkesbury prepares an updated Sustainable Forest Management Long-term Plan, the company has begun a broad public input program for its forest management area in eastern Nova Scotia. The company is seeking input from the general public about important societal, environmental and economic forest values as well as its forest management practices. A series of open houses will be held throughout the company's operating area in 2009 and early 2010. The first community open house was held in the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's on January 21, 2009. Approximately 25 people attended, including the District Council, and nine Woodlands Unit staff were on hand to answer questions and discuss forest management on both public and private lands in the District. Maps and posters were displayed, which showed information on various items such as historical and planned operating areas, high conservation value forests, private woodland management, Forest Ecosystem Classification system, indicators of sustainable forest management, and forest certification.

Upcoming open houses will be held in the Municipality of the District of Guysborough, St. Andrews, Stellarton, Port Hood, St. Peters, Baddeck, Sydney, and First Nation communities. Further announcements will be made as each open house is

scheduled throughout the year. NewPage Port Hawkesbury encourages you to participate in an open house to learn more about what the company is doing in your area. The company also wants to hear from you about how NewPage Port Hawkesbury is managing forest land and what values are most important to you.





Nova Forest Alliance partner representative, Don Parker, presents a set of books to Vice-Principal Myra Thiemann and Grade 6 student Blake Erskine, Upper Musquodoboit Consolidated School. In 2008, the book sets, which explore forest related themes for grades P-6, were gifted to 40 elementary schools in forest communities of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.



PEIMFNP Forest Ambassador Awards were awarded at a private woodlot in Grand River, PEI on November 15, 2008 to John Rice and Bruce Craig in recognition of demonstrating *Outstanding Leadership* in the Islands' Forest Community. Left to right - Dr. Ian MacQuarrie, PEI Model Forest (presenter), Bruce Craig, Craig Construction (award recipient), Richard Gill, PEI Model Forest (presenter), and John Rice, Woodlot Owner (award recipient).

Nova Forest Alliance

Partners

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 Barrett Lumber Company
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 Canadian Institute of Forestry NS Section
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 CMM - First Nations Forestry Program
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 PEI Model Forest Network Partnership Ltd.
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 Wood Product Manufacturing Association of NS

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