

Dear: Community Members

The '2014 Forest Management Strategy' is a plan for the management of forestry operations in New Brunswick which was put in place by the last provincial government.

When the new provincial government came into office, they decided to take a look at the strategy to see what would be good to keep, and also what changes should be made going forward.

As you know, the forest plays a huge role in our ability to practice Aboriginal and treaty rights, whether it be through harvesting of wood, harvesting of traditional foods and medicines, or access to hunting grounds etc.

The current provincial government has a legal obligation known as the 'Duty to Consult' to consult with us on actions which may infringe upon those rights. The current Minister of the Department of Energy and Resource Development (DERD) Rick Doucet, and his staff, seem committed to engaging with us in forest management going forward.

Premier Gallant's review of the '2014 Forest Management Strategy' resulted in changes related to First Nations which are indicated in this community bulletin.



Improvements were made across 5 main themes:

- respecting the rights and developing the interests of First Nations;
- improving long-term conservation of forest biodiversity;
- creating a vibrant and competitive forest sector;
- growing a healthy and productive forest; and
- maintaining transparency and accountability for Crown forest management.

Under these themes, some important improvements to highlight are:

“Respecting the rights and developing the interests of First Nations

- Begin early engagement and consultation with First Nations in the development of any future changes in forest strategy during the lead-up to the 2022-2032 Crown forest management plans.
- Incorporate the First Nations’ traditional knowledge of the forest as well as their ability to exercise Aboriginal and treaty rights into decision-making.
- Support First Nations’ interests in economic development and employment opportunities in the forest sector.
- Work with the Crown timber licensees and the government’s archeological services team to improve the manner in which planned forest activities respect with due dignity all known sites of cultural and historical significance to First Nations.
- Continue to train the New Brunswick civil service on the Duty to Consult and cultural awareness so the recognition for the need to consult occurs earlier and is achieved with more meaningful dialogue.”

“Improving long-term conservation of forest biodiversity

- Over the next decade, designate 150,000 ha of Conservation forest - government will begin increasing conservation forests in New Brunswick this year.
- Continue to protect water quality during operations, and work to better map and understand how water flows throughout the forested landscape.”

The First Nations theme reinforces to the public, and the forest industry, the government's ongoing work to build its government-to-government relationship with First Nations.

The government has already made a public announcement that it will maintain the 2014 Forest Management Strategy's Crown timber allocations (harvestable wood cut on Crown lands) in agreements with forest sector companies.

The increase in volume allocations provided an additional 30,000 m³ of softwood volume beginning in 2015 to First Nations through the Commercial Harvest Agreements.

The release of 'A Review of the 2014 Forest Management Strategy' is a step forward. It is not meant to solve all of the concerns or issues, but to be a building block for ongoing and future economic, and consultation discussions.

If you have any further questions or concerns about this announcement or any other Forestry related matters, please feel free to contact your community's Resource Development Consultation Coordinator, Forestry Coordinator or Forestry Advisor for Maliseet Nation New Brunswick (MNNB).

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