

Fundy Model Forest takes action to help struggling forest-based communities through Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Forest Service funding

Sussex—Fundy Model Forest recently signed a contribution agreement with Natural Resources Canada's Canadian Forest Service to deliver the federal government's new Forest Communities Program in New Brunswick.

Under the signed agreement, Fundy Model Forest will receive \$1.6 million over five years (2007 -2012) to help forest-dependent communities take advantage of new economic opportunities from forest resources and to build stable local economies.

“New Brunswick is one of the most forest-dependent provinces in Canada, and we are very pleased to be working with the Fundy Model Forest to implement this new program in New Brunswick,” Dr. John Richards, Director General of Canadian Forest Service in Atlantic, said. “The program will help communities to capitalize on emerging resource-based economic opportunities and create community ventures based on new types of forest products.”

With the signing of the agreement, Fundy Model Forest is able to begin its first slate of collaborative projects under the new program. “One of the first projects that we are supporting is to find out what has already been tried and what is known about communities that have lost their primary industry,” Dr. Dave MacLean, president of the Fundy Model Forest said.

The Rural and Small Town Programme at Mount Allison University is gathering this information and will present it by March 31, 2008.

“Over the next four years we will be working with communities of all types throughout the province,” Dr. MacLean said. “We are already in the process of talking to towns and villages that are being affected by the mill closures and groups of people, such as the woodlot owners who are also severely impacted, to determine how we may be best able to help.”

Some ways that the Model Forest may be able to help is through exploring the economic development potential of bio-fuels, energy co-generation, and the production of alternative energy such as wood pellets.

The Fundy Model Forest is made up of more than 30 dedicated partner-organizations representing the provincial government, municipalities, industry, research organizations and universities, as well as non-governmental groups who have successfully collaborating for the past 15 years. “Our partners have been very supportive of our new program,” Dr. MacLean said. “We have also received support from other agencies and organizations, as well and look forward to partnering with them in the future.”

FMF is one of 11 sites across Canada selected by Natural Resources Canada-Canadian Forest Service to deliver the Forest Communities Program. It is a member of the Canadian Model Forest Network and the International Model Forest Network.

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