

Forestry Transition Team

Update to the Forestry Sector

December 2020



New developments in forestry transition

Since our last update in June, several new initiatives have been introduced to further help individuals embrace a new vision for forestry, identify new opportunities and adapt to change.

The Forestry Transition Team received feedback from numerous organizations and individuals about the critical need to improve access to financing. In October, the Department of Agriculture responded by announcing a modernized Nova Scotia Timber Loan Board – a lending agency dedicated to the growth and expansion of a sustainable forest sector. See more in the article on page 3.

Efforts continue to be focused on ensuring we have a skilled workforce that can support an innovative and diversified forestry sector. In partnership with Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) as well as the Nova Scotia Community College, a number of workforce initiatives are underway including an asset mapping project to identify current forestry-related formal and informal education, trades-related training, associations, research and innovation throughout Atlantic Canada. Further analysis on this inventory will help reveal gaps and opportunities for partnerships or the development of new training.

With \$250,000 in new funding and support from LAE, the Forestry Human Resources Sector Council is working closely with Forest Nova Scotia and other partners to establish an industry-led approach to workforce planning and development in the immediate and longer term.

Vision for Forestry in Nova Scotia

A strong, sustainable, inclusive, diversified, and innovative forestry sector, respected for its stewardship practices, and successfully delivering high value for lower ecological impact.

Transition Priorities

- Innovation, Diversification & Entrepreneurship
- Workforce Development
- Woodlot Owner Leadership
- Supply Chain Viability



The Transition Team also coordinated three virtual trade missions with Sweden, Finland and Maine in August and September. Led by the Minister of Lands and Forestry, the missions brought together government officials, representatives from research and development institutions and forestry sector leaders to discuss best practices in forestry management, bio-economy innovative technologies, landowner engagement and product and trade diversification. See more in the article on page 3.

The Nova Scotia Forestry Innovation Transition Trust is fully operational and recently approved its first two projects, valued at up to \$2 million and \$288,596. Three more projects are approved in principle and other proposals are still under review. The Trust is a \$50 million fund that is managed independently to support projects that align with the new vision for forestry in Nova Scotia. Projects focus on accelerating new opportunities to enhance environmental, social and economic values and adoption of new ecological forestry practices. The Trust will call for proposals three times in 2021–22.

While the COVID-19 pandemic continues to create unprecedented health and economic challenges, the forestry sector is demonstrating its resilience – adapting quickly to public safety measures to meet the exploding demand for lumber created by the pandemic.

Together, the Transition Team, government, the Forestry Innovation Transition Trust, the Minister's Advisory Committee on the implementation of ecological forestry, sector organizations and individuals are laying the foundation for a stronger, more diverse and sustainable sector – a sector that will continue to play an important role in Nova Scotia's post-pandemic recovery.

Transition Team Initiatives – Results to Date

Since January 2020, the transition team endorsed nearly **\$75 million** in new initiatives and provided advice on government policies and programs to support this important forestry transition.

Transition Team Meetings

28 meetings held in 2020, not including stakeholder meetings

Emergency assistance program

1,235 payments to individuals,
\$1.2 million

Forestry Apprenticeship Initiative

119 applicants: 87 assessments,
32 referred to NSCC,
27 found new employment

Silviculture and road programs

\$7M will be fully allocated
by March 31, 2021

Credit Union Contractor Lending Program

26 loans approved,
totalling **\$1.1 million**

Flexibility during spring road closures

5 approved applications
from forestry sector

Annual land purchase program updated guidelines

\$1.5 million allocated,
applications being processed



Improved financing for forestry sector

The Transition Team endorsed the renewal of the Nova Scotia Timber Loan Board to better align with the needs of small and medium-sized businesses as they adapt to changes in forestry, diversify and embrace innovation.

The mandate of the loan board is to finance projects that support Nova Scotia's forest resource industry. In October, the loan board modernized its lending program and regulations and updated its lending terms and eligibility criteria to make financing more accessible to forestry sector companies.

The loan board can provide financing for buildings and equipment, developing business cases, upgrading facilities and land purchases at market interest rates with flexible and innovative terms (e.g. repayment schedules, security and financing). Applications will be considered from existing forestry businesses and new entrants.

For more information, visit

<https://novascotia.ca/farmloan/timberloan/>

Trade opportunities & market intelligence

Growth in international demand for a variety of forestry products, such as lumber, mass timber and pellets, and proximity to key markets, creates opportunity for the sector.

Under the Transition Team's priority of Innovation, Diversification and Entrepreneurship, we learned more about potential opportunities during the virtual trade missions with Sweden, Finland and Maine.

To help inform business decisions and focus Nova Scotia's export opportunities, information from these meetings as well as additional market intelligence recently collected, is now available on the forestry sector support website at www.novascotia.ca/forestry-sector-support, under Forestry Sector Transition.

\$50M Forestry Innovation Transition Trust

2 projects approved to date,
worth **\$2,288,596**

Forestry Innovation Rebate Program (NSBI)

1 project approved

Wood Heat Initiative

Construction of six projects
nearly complete, more sites
being assessed

Forestry HR Sector Council

Provided with **\$250,000** to
support workforce planning
and development

Nova Scotia Timber Loan Board updates

Launched in October

Toll-free Line

More than **650 people** assisted

Dedicated website with program information

19,361 pageviews since
Jan. 6, 2020 launch



Woodlot owner leadership and engagement

Nearly 33,000 private woodland owners play an important role in managing Nova Scotia's forests. Some manage their land for commercial purposes, others do not have commercial interests and still others have intentions somewhere in between.

The Transition Team is interested in a 'made in Nova Scotia' approach to engaging private-woodland owners in leading a forest culture focused on forest stewardship and rural economic development. Establishing a landowner network could help connect every type of landowner with the programs, services and information they need.

Coming soon is an initiative to reach out to woodland owners, through an online survey. This survey will help us better understand how woodland owners approach land management, assess their programming and service needs and areas of interest, and how to best keep the lines of communication open.

We expect the survey to launch in early 2020.

Additional Resources

The latest program information: www.novascotia.ca/forestry-sector-support

Forestry Transition Innovation Trust: www.novascotia.ca/forestry-trust/

Nova Scotia Timber Loan Board: www.novascotia.ca/farmloan/timberloan/

Nova Scotia Works centres: www.novascotiaworks.ca/nsdc

Call if you need support

Workers and businesses who have questions or need help

Toll-free: 1-888-315-0110

Workers who need emergency funding due to a lay-off

Toll-free: 1-833-424-8849

Professional counselling support, provided by Morneau Shepell

Toll-free: 1-866-885-6540

Help to find services and programs offered by local community groups, non-profits and government departments

Call or text 211

