

# Forestry Transition Team

## Update to the Forestry Sector June 2020

### Supporting a Diversified Sector Through Transition

It has been six months since Premier Stephen McNeil announced the creation of a team to provide advice to government and to inform short and longer-term solutions for transitioning Nova Scotia's forestry sector. Since then, the Forestry Transition Team has met regularly to hear sector feedback, provide advice on initiatives that support sector workers and chart a path for the future.

While these past few months have been difficult, no one could have predicted the further impact of a global pandemic this Spring, which has dramatically changed the way we work and interact with each other. Despite these challenges, the Transition Team has stayed focused on our mandate and we would like to update you on our work to help the forestry sector.

Since January, the team has endorsed spending of about \$25 million in new training and funding initiatives as well as program adjustments involving various government departments and agencies. Many of these initiatives were based on input or ideas from the sector and we are working on implementing several more.

You can find these initiatives at: [www.novascotia.ca/forestry-sector-support](http://www.novascotia.ca/forestry-sector-support)

We recognize that one of the challenges for the sector generally has been identifying markets for excess by-products that were otherwise consumed by Northern Pulp. Many of you have pointed out that burning more biomass in existing Nova Scotia facilities as well as creating more opportunities to generate wood heat through increased pellet production or other wood heat initiatives could provide uses for these excess by-products in the absence of alternate markets.

The Department of Lands and Forestry is moving ahead with small-scale wood heat generation projects. Negotiations are underway now with proponents for the first six sites with plans to build them over the next several months and become operational by late Fall. We also expect more information about an expansion of this program soon.

With the onset of COVID-19 and continued delays at the Muskrat Falls project, it became increasingly difficult for Nova Scotia Power to meet its 40% renewable energy target in 2020. As part of a new plan, Nova Scotia Power will meet its target over three years, in part, by using more local sources of renewable energy. Domestic biomass by-products are a possible source. Nova Scotia Power will determine how it moves ahead, but we expect less use of coal for electricity generation while keeping rates stable for Nova Scotians.

Another critical area for the transition of the sector is access to capital. The Transition Team is exploring a number of suggested options in addition to the \$7 million for much-needed silviculture and road work, the Contractor Loan program and Nova Scotia Business Inc.'s Forestry Innovation Rebate program. This year, the Department of Lands and Forestry is focusing its annual land purchasing program on acquiring land that has public value from forestry landowners for fair market value. Provincial government departments and agencies are also working together to provide advice and support to private sector organizations seeking financial and other supports for forestry and bio-economy proposals by helping them to navigate existing provincial and federal government programming.

Many of you have also asked for information about the recently announced \$50 million Forestry Innovation Transition Trust. Three trustees have been appointed and are gathering information about sector needs as well as finalizing the details of their application process. Transition Team members recently met with and briefed the trustees on our work, priorities and responsibilities as they prepare to accept proposals that will help transform the sector. They are working toward launching in early July.

A diverse and innovative forestry sector will continue to need a professional and skilled workforce. The Department of Labour and Advanced Education has provided \$250,000 to Forest Nova Scotia to establish a new Forest Sector Council. Over the next year, the council will work within the sector to better understand its immediate and future workforce needs, including: preparing industry for change and innovation and creating industry-specific labour market information to enable better planning, succession planning and matching supply and demand.



Despite our ongoing challenges, this sector is resilient. Many innovative, creative and determined people have come forward with ideas because they believe in the potential of the forestry sector to contribute to our social and economic well-being.

We firmly believe forestry has an important role in our province's economic recovery and are energized by the possibilities that lie ahead.

## A New Vision for Forestry in Nova Scotia

Our meetings and correspondence with sector representatives, individuals and stakeholders have provided us with considerable feedback and various perspectives about what is required to transform the sector. In particular, during the Forest Nova Scotia AGM in February, there was a resounding call for a vision statement for the province's forestry sector.

We heard you. As part of our mandate to identify longer-term and innovative approaches for the forestry sector, the Transition Team has developed a new vision, principles and strategic priorities. This framework will help guide decision making for government and the Trust and help prioritize efforts as we move forward.

### Vision:

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

### Guiding Principles:

- Build on comparative advantage and support diversification and development of new products and markets
- Protect and enhance ecosystems and biodiversity
- Engage local communities, incorporate local knowledge and encourage local leadership in forest management
- Develop and provide scientific and technical knowledge aimed at improving our capability to protect, manage, and use forests
- Make the best, most efficient use of all available programs and resources

## Transition Priorities:

### 1. Innovation, Diversification and Entrepreneurship

- Invest in and nurture a portfolio of activities focused on adding more value to the existing resource, while lowering ecological impacts (research, innovation, productivity enhancement, product diversification, resource improvement, market diversification). Possible investments could include technology pilots and projects that enable emerging technologies and promising innovations on the horizon (e.g. bioplastics, biofuel, advanced materials).
- Encourage risk taking and experimentation in Nova Scotia's sustainable forestry and biological resources sector by supporting new and young businesses through the provision of entrepreneurial grants that can be leveraged to secure additional financing.
- Informed by major drivers of government policy and consumer sentiments worldwide: pandemic economic recovery, climate change ambition, carbon neutrality, need for modern building products, renewability/sustainability and innovation in materials science.

### 2. Workforce Development

- Invest in partnerships with post-secondary institutions and professional associations aimed at keeping the forestry industry competitive by professionalizing the forestry workforce in Nova Scotia.
- Programming based on the principles and practices of sustainable forest land management as well as workforce development for ramping up the application of known technologies.
- Goals may include, but are not limited to, new certification, training and skills development, and new strategies for recruitment and encouraging careers in the forestry-related occupations of the future.
- Skills development for implementation of ecological forestry to align with Forest Practices Review recommendations

### **3. Woodlot Owner Leadership**

- Invest in a 'made in NS, private-woodlot owner-led model' aimed at creating a forest culture in the province focused on forest stewardship and rural economic development.
- Goals may include, but are not limited to, creating a strong landowner support network including cooperatives, structure and tools for managing forestry inventory data, collaborating with other resource sectors (e.g. Agriculture), market development, investment attraction and contractor support.

### **4. Supply Chain Viability**

- Continue to anticipate and mitigate risk to the forestry supply chain network in the Province.
- Enable the sector to reduce operating costs and increase efficiency by assisting sustainable forestry and biological resource businesses to invest in:
  - Technologies that increase fiber utilization
  - Technologies that demonstrate business inputs more efficiently
  - Technologies that produce products at lower cost
  - Technologies that demonstrably reduce GHG emissions
  - Process automation technologies
  - Transportation
  - Productivity of mills and contractors / crews

## Realizing the Vision

We invite you to reflect on this vision framework and consider what it means for your work or your business as you plan your forestry future.

While the following organizations are directly involved in work to support forestry, it will take collaboration among and within the sector, government, indigenous groups and others with interest, expertise and perspectives to help realize this new vision for forestry.

Government Departments and Agencies	Forestry Transition Team	Forestry Innovation Trust	Lands and Forestry Minister's Advisory Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align policy, legislation and regulation</li> <li>• Evaluate/approve private sector applications to government programs</li> <li>• Support Transition Team</li> <li>• Support Secretariat to Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise government</li> <li>• Advise Trust</li> <li>• Advise and support strategic working groups</li> <li>• Review concepts and applications for sector support and provide input to government and Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate, approve applications</li> <li>• Manage the funds in the Trust</li> <li>• Make independent decisions on applications to the Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise the Minister on the implementation of ecological forestry</li> <li>• Advise Professor Lahey on his evaluation</li> </ul>

As we move forward, government, the Transition Team, the Trust and the Minister's Advisory Council are committed to working together in alignment to support the transformation of the forestry sector.

## Additional Resources

The latest program information is available at:  
[www.novascotia.ca/forestry-sector-support](http://www.novascotia.ca/forestry-sector-support)

## 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**