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Congratulations to the Natuaqanek First Nation!

In April, FNFP E-News brought you the story of the Eel Ground (Natuaqanek) First Nation moving toward certification of their sustainable forest management plan and practices. It is our great pleasure to follow-up with the story of their success.

The Natuaqanek First Nation is situated near Miramichi City on the banks of the Miramichi River in New Brunswick. Official announcement of the community's certification through the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) was made in November, marking the first FSC certification granted in that province. "Being first will hopefully set the standard for forest management in New Brunswick..." says Stephen Ginnish, who volunteered his time on this project in his role as the Natuaqanek Forestry Development Officer.

Under the guidance of Virginia Sark, Certification Coordinator, the community developed a new 100-year management plan, inclusive of all forestry and community aspirations. Certification of the plan is seen as an important step for Natuaqanek, providing the community with a framework for managing all aspects of human impact on the natural environment, including forestry operations, community planning, and waste management.

"Investment is critical to taking the next step toward maintaining a sustainable community and fostering an increase in economic development," stated Mr. Ginnish. Now that Natuaqanek has attained certification, it is hoped that potential investors will recognize Natuaqanek as a good place to do business.

When reflecting Natuaqanek's accomplishment, Ms. Sark is quick to point out that the community could not have attained certification without assistance provided by the First Nations Forestry Program. "The program was a partner from the beginning, providing essential funding and technical support to the community."

For more information, contact Mr. Ginnish by email at egcdcgis@aibn.com.

Pikangikum Land Use Plan Under Review

The Pikangikum First Nation faces a paradox that is shared by many First Nations in Canada. Located on Pikangikum Lake, approximately 100 km northwest of Red Lake, Ontario, the community of 2100 people is surrounded by natural resources. Like other First Nations, the community is endeavouring to increase employment opportunities related to its natural resources.

Recognizing that youth unemployment was a major issue, the community began negotiations with the province of Ontario to acquire a Forest Management Licence Agreement for their traditional



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territory. Those negotiations were successful, along with agreement on a planning process, and in 2000 the Whitefeather Forest Initiative was born. Securing new resource-based economic opportunities within the traditional territories of the Pikangikum First Nation is the primary goal of the initiative, including pursuit of commercial forest management tenure and sustainable land use in protected areas.

The culmination of the White Feather Forest Initiative has been the preparation of a draft land use strategy for the White feather Forest and adjacent areas (a total area encompassing 1.3 million hectares). This comprehensive plan focuses on three components; stewardship, customary activities and economic development, and includes traditional land uses, commercial forestry, non-timber forest products, mineral development, recreation, strategic access/infrastructure and environmentally protected areas.

In November 2005, the Pikangikum First Nation held an open house to solicit public input into the draft document. The final land use plan is expected to be completed by March, 2006.

For more information on the Whitefeather Forest Initiative, contact the Whitefeather Forest Management Corporation by telephone: (807) 773-9954, or visit their web-site: <http://whitefeatherforest.com>

Did you know?

The First Nations Forestry Program has financially supported the Pikangikum First Nation from the beginning of this initiative in 1999, and has included its accomplishments in the recently released publication *First Nations Forestry Program Success Stories*. To obtain your free copy, order on-line: http://www.fnfp.gc.ca/content/publicationSearch_e.php or call (613) 992-5874.

Upcoming Events

First Nations Boreal Forest Issue Workshop and National Aboriginal Forestry Association Annual General Meeting – February 24, 2006 at the Holiday Inn and Suites in Ottawa, Ontario. Contact Janet Pronovost at (613) 233-5563 for more information, or visit the NAFA website <http://www.nafaforestry.org/>