



A joint Natural Resources Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada program.

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Atlantic Forestry Centre Welcomes Aboriginal Youth to Experience Science & Technology

Natural Resources Canada added its name to the list of partners who helped make the fifth annual *First Nations and Inuit National Science Camp* a success. The Canadian Forest Service's Dr. Jon Sweeney and Reg Parsons introduced their field of work to Aboriginal students by leading hands-on workshops at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton.

"The goal of this camp is to promote science – essentially forestry, geology, energy and health – as career options to Aboriginal students," says Manson Gloade of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). "These sectors traditionally do not have a large number of Aboriginal workers and we would like to see that changed. We are glad to have partners like NRCan that are willing to work with us to see this happen."



Jon answers a question from an interested camper

Each year, the camp is held in a different region of the country so that participants are continually offered new experiences and opportunities. This year's program ran from August 5th – 12th as participants discovered science and technology in the Atlantic region. Fifty middle school students representing almost every province and territory across Canada enjoyed the beauty of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Dr. Jon Sweeney, CFS – Atlantic Forestry Centre (AFC) entomologist, exposed students to the fascinating world of insects. Jon helped them examine specimens under the microscope to demonstrate that there is more to nature than what meets the eye. "These camps are a chance for students to see new places, meet new people and experience something different," he says. "This is an opportunity to inspire youth and encourage them to take an active interest in the world around them."

While in NS, the schedule of events included tours at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography and the Dalhousie Medical School. Whale watching in St. Andrew's and a visit to Kingsclear First Nation Reserve topped the list of activities that students enjoyed in NB.



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Reg Parsons, CFS Aboriginal Liaison Officer, traveled from the AFC in Corner Brook to speak with students about traditional ecological knowledge. As an Inuit from Newfoundland and Labrador, he hopes that students will understand the significance of his topic. Reg explains, “It’s great to talk with youth from across the whole country. I want to inspire them to steer their own future and be the change they want to see in the world.” He continues, “I truly enjoy sharing my job experiences to make students aware of what’s out there for them. There are so many opportunities for Aboriginal youth in this country. I don’t want to see it slip away.”

The ***First Nations and Inuit National Science Camp*** was sponsored by INAC, with support from academic and government partners, including NRCan-CFS’s First Nations Forestry Program.

For information:

Reg Parsons
(709) 637-4906
rparsons@nrcan.gc.ca

First Nations values impact sustainable development of their forests

Forests of Quebec and Labrador are of the utmost importance to First Nations living in those regions. To many, the forest is at the very core of their identity. In recognizing the need of First Nations for guidance to fully participate in forest management and to meet the many requests from government and industry, the *Chiefs’ Assembly of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador (AFNQL)* took the first step in November 1997 of adopting the *First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Strategy*. The strategy was updated and the new version adopted in June 2006.

The Chiefs also recognized that Aboriginal traditional knowledge is essential to both current and future forest management - even to the very survival of the forests. Since the strategy was inspired by and developed based on ancestral lifestyles and traditional knowledge, it would become a valuable tool to firmly entrench First Nations values into the realities of the modern world of forestry.

To ensure that First Nations play a significant role in the sustainable management of their own resources, the Chiefs requested establishment of the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Sustainable Development Institute (FNQLSDI). With regard to forestry, the institute’s mandate includes provision of expert advice, creation of efficient tools, and support to individual Chiefs and their communities in sustainable management of their resources. The institute’s advisory committee comprises one representative from each First Nation and a representative each from the following organizations: Quebec Native Women; First Nations Youth Council; and, the *AFNQL*. This committee’s role is to guide the FNQLSDI activities and carry out its mandate.

FNQLSDI assists the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador by conducting training sessions and workshops, producing information reports, and facilitating exchanges among the First Nations to ensure that everyone benefits from the various steps in implementation of the strategy. They also help to integrate the management of multiple resources on First Nations’ land.

Funding from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) has helped the institute to offer training to First Nations youth and to develop tools such as workshops and reference guides on Aboriginal forest harmonization and forest certification. Other FNFP projects the institute has undertaken have assisted the Aboriginal Provincial Forest Commission in establishing criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management from a First Nations perspective.

Solid support from FNQLSDI and FNFP over the last four years has helped to guide First Nations forest communities in Quebec and Labrador toward realization of their own sustainable development.

For information, contact:

Mario Gros-Louis
FNQLSDI
(418) 843-0351
mgroslois@iddpnql.ca

Alain Dubois
Laurentian Forestry Centre
(418) 648-7134
adubois@nrcan.gc.ca

New Program for Canada's Forest Communities

In July, the federal government announced a commitment of \$25 million over five years for a new Forest Communities Program (FCP). The new program, which replaces funding previously available under Canada's Model Forest Program, will support 11 forest community regions across Canada develop and share new knowledge, tools and practices to help them meet the challenges of a changing forest industry and take advantage of emerging forest-based economic opportunities. The program will also support collaboration on forest community issues at the national level.

The new program has four objectives:

- To develop new forest-based economic opportunities through collaboration with industry and other community stakeholders
- To facilitate capacity-building and engagement of communities to meet sector transition issues
- To promote integrated, cross-sectoral approaches to forest land management
- To share best practices and information tools with forest communities across Canada and internationally

"The new Forest Communities Program reflects changing circumstances and opportunities for forest communities in Canada," said Brian Wilson, National Director of Programs with Natural Resources Canada–Canadian Forest Service's (NRCan–CFS) Science and Programs Branch. "First Nations are expected to play a significant part in these community level partnerships."

NRCan–CFS is in discussions to complete multi-year funding agreements with the 11 FCP sites. At the national level, the department has signed a Memorandum of Understanding to pursue collaborative initiatives with the Canadian Model Forest Network, and is negotiating a multi-year funding agreement. An inaugural meeting of Forest Community Program participants was held in Ottawa September 27-28, 2007.