

SUMMARY

Citizens' group urges clearcutting ban

Clearcutting on Crown land should be banned by the end of next year, group says

The Healthy Forest Coalition, an advocacy group promoting reform of Nova Scotia's forest policies, believes that current harvesting rates of 35,000 to 50,000 hectares a year are unsustainable.

The remedy for current problems is to stop clearcutting, particularly on Crown land. Selection cutting, which retains the forest around harvested trees, and investing in ecologically sensitive forest management, will promote biodiversity and job growth. Older growth may even bring new wealth as a result of carbon pricing. The coalition argues that **CHANGE=JOBS**.

The coalition believes our forests and our forest economy can recover if government and forest companies...

- **acknowledge the need for major change**
- **recognize the ecological and economic value of biodiverse, uneven-age forests**
- **work together to ensure that CHANGE=JOBS**

And government...

- **bans clearcutting on Crown land**
- **does more to support landowners, contractors and registered buyers who want to pursue restorative forest**

Biologists have been criticizing industrial forestry methods for decades. They have shown that when over 80% of harvesting is done through clearcutting the consequences for the wildlife, forest soils, water, the water table and even the climate are devastating. Woodland wildlife disappears, often for ever, when habitat is destroyed

Now, the economic consequences are becoming obvious.

Employment in forestry and logging is declining. In 2015 that sector employed only 1,267. It may be lower today. In 1998 Nova Scotia wood products businesses added \$127 of value/per metre of wood harvested. By 2004 we were adding only \$107. With the decline of our pulp and paper business and demise of smaller enterprises, it cannot have improved.

Members of the coalition blame indiscriminate clearcutting for many of the problems in our woodlands. As the coalition website (healthyforestcoalition.ca) puts it: 'Roughly 40% of Nova

Scotia's forests have been clearcut in the past 25 years. What's left? A legacy of degraded soils and forests, destroyed habitats for wildlife, and dried up streams.'

Clearcuts take years to recover. In South West Nova Scotia, where the WestFor consortium has been clearcutting large blocks of Crown land, soils are so poor that DNR's own scientists have said that 'currently projected plantation yields are not sustainable.'

- In 2000 a Nova Forest Alliance survey found that 87% of a sample of 643 central Nova Scotia residents believed that clearcutting should be permitted only in certain cases or banned. 80% wanted forest companies to do more to protect the environment, even if jobs were lost.
- Between 2007 and 2009 the major public consultation on natural resource strategy conducted by NS Voluntary Planning confirmed that Nova Scotians wanted clearcutting greatly reduced.
- In 2016 an on-line petition protesting clearcut harvesting of biomass for producing electricity was signed by over 4,000 Nova Scotians and some 30,000 world-wide.

In 2011 the government promised to reduce clearcutting by 50%, then weakened the definition of clearcutting. In August, 2016, even that commitment was abandoned. It should be restored and could be achieved by banning clearcutting on Crown lands.