



For immediate release:

Nov. 3, 2020

CLEARCUTTING MUST STOP - HEALTHY FOREST COALITION ALARMED BY 'CUTTING FRENZY'

Convinced that the government has abandoned its commitment to implement the recommendations of the Independent Review of Forest Practices, the Healthy Forest Coalition (HFC) is calling for 'a moratorium on all even-aged harvests' on public lands.

Speaking for HFC, Coordinator Mike Lancaster says that 'high conservation forests have been lost at an unacceptable rate,' since Professor William Lahey reported on the review over two years ago. In December 2018 the government accepted the 'spirit and intent' of his recommendations. Since then development of new silviculture guides has proceeded extremely slowly, while the Department of Lands and Forestry has allowed harvests to proceed at an increased pace under the old rules. Since the beginning of 2019 the department has received applications for harvesting almost 25,000 ha. of Crown land. Most of these have been approved. There has been a slight increase in approvals for uneven age treatment, but HFC estimates that over 71.6% of these harvests will be 'even aged' treatments.

HFC members doubt that Lands and Forestry can be solely responsible for implementing the recommended reforms. They included introducing an internal administrative culture of 'transparency and accountability' that would facilitate a shift to ecological forestry. He notes that Lahey's recommendations are similar to those of the 2011 conclusions of the public consultation on Natural Resource Strategy which the Department of Natural Resources, the predecessor of LAF, also largely ignored.

The HFC believes the necessary reforms cannot occur under the legislative framework currently governing forest management. 'The Crown Lands Act and the Forest Act ... ensure our forests are managed through a paradigm of "forestry/fiber first"', Lancaster says. They must be replaced with legislation that not only embraces forestry values, but also ecological, social, recreational and tourism values.

This would include reviewing and updating the Crown Lands Act to enable the triad model of public land management to be fully implemented. It would necessitate providing for the involvement of both LAF and the Nova Scotia Department of the Environment in public land use planning.

Until Lahey's recommendations are implemented 'in their true spirit and intent', the Healthy Forest Coalition calls for 'a moratorium on all even-aged harvests, including variable retention, salvage cuts, and uniform shelterwoods.'

The decision to make this call, Lancaster says, 'was not taken lightly.' It comes from a desire to see true ecologically-based forestry succeed in Nova Scotia. 'This is the vision that the Independent Review recommended and a goal that all Nova Scotians can share. This vision cannot be realized if thousands of hectares of public, Acadian forest continue to be converted to even-aged stands managed under a 'fiber-first' system. The HFC makes this call for the future of our forests and our forest ecology.'

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