

NOTE: The following is by Dr. Ted Needham (UNB, retired). Ted has been an advocate for forest extension for woodlot owners for many years and has a great deal of experience and knowledge in this area. NBFWO is grateful for his participation and advice as we work with DNRED staff and other stakeholders to create a forest extension program that reflects woodlot owners’ needs and values and supports both individual woodlots and the provincial forestry sector.

On April 15, Ted emailed this update to DNRED staff, asking for help with the missing numbers in the table below. April 24 – received additional numbers, updates are in blue.

If you would like to provide feedback regarding the “uses” discussed below, please [click here](#), or scan the QR code.



Private Woodlot Sustainability Fund - Proposed Definitions and Some Future Plans

On Dec. 16, 2023, the Private Woodlot Sustainability Fund (PWSF) was created with royal assent of the Private Woodlot Sustainability Act. In this article, we describe the intended ‘Uses of the Fund’, propose as yet unspecified definitions of each use, and give the status of the fund.

Money in the fund comes from the royalty government charges for timber harvested on Crown land and the money generated for the fund is allocated for the following 4 ‘Uses’:

1. Support additional silviculture
2. Engage woodlot owners in developing management plans
3. Support the development and completion of management plans by providing training, educational materials and other support on forest management to owners of private woodlots
4. Enhance fire and pest protection on private woodlots.

What these ‘Uses’ mean has not been articulated, although money has been allocated for some of them by DNR as given below:

Year	Available	Allocation
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	Funding Available	Additional Silviculture	Management plans	Educational Support	Protection
2024/25	\$10.2M	\$3M	-	0	
2025/26	\$18.0M	\$5M	\$0.8M	0	\$1M
2026/27 (proposed)	\$15.4M*	\$5.0M	\$0.7M	\$0.6M	\$1.0M

*Projected (not yet finalized)

In May 2023, the Federation proposed definitions for the ‘Uses of the Fund’ to help ensure money was spent in meaningful and effective ways. The following summarizes them.

1. Support additional silviculture on private woodlots.

We proposed ‘**additional silviculture**’ mean

- Getting more hectares of silviculture done on more private woodlots than occurs without the fund, and
- That different but appropriate types of silviculture be identified and used to better fulfill woodlot owner goals, objectives, and the unique character of their woodlots than historically allowed. Historically, much of the ‘allowed’ silviculture is the same as used on crown land for large scale timber production, and while useful in some circumstances it may not be fully suitable.

2. Engage private woodlot owners in developing management plans. We proposed:

All woodlot owners have meaningful plans for their woodlot. Engaging woodlot owners is good and needed but having meaningful plans that enable efficient, effective, and informed fund allocation that meets individual owner objectives while contributing to New Brunswick’s economy and environmental goals as a whole is better. Woodlot owners through their plans individually and collectively need to drive ‘Fund’ allocations.

Woodlot owners’ goals and objectives need to drive their plans. Traditionally, woodlot ‘management plans’ developed by Marketing Boards have focused on timber production to meet industrial wood supply needs. Under the Private Woodlot Sustainability Fund (PWSF), timber production may be one of a woodlot owner’s goals, but there may be others as well and these need to be discovered and articulated so funding can be directed toward filling them.

Woodlot owners need to be active co-participants in the creation of a management plan along with a professional forester. Co-development ensures a woodlot owner’s aims and implementation preferences are articulated then realized. Professional foresters bring

guidance, expertise, and insight needed to support woodlot owners' individual and collective success and help move plans from concept to fruition.

3. **Support the development and completion of management plans by providing training, educational materials and other support on forest management to owners of private woodlots.**

We propose the fund partly be used to **develop and deliver educational materials to woodlot owners** to enhance: knowledge about their woodlot, understanding about forest science and woodlot management; and their woodlot decision-making ability.

Be allocated to the continuing education of the forestry professionals working with woodlot owners. Woodlot forestry is more complicated than industrial forestry and the professionals working with woodlot owners need woodlot specific continuing education to be effective. Their continuing education should be in woodlot forest science and management, teaching and learning, and interpersonal communication.

Be allocated to support post-secondary education interns (university and college students) working with private woodlot forestry professionals. Interns can provide assistance to professional foresters while also enhancing their post-secondary education through experiential learning. This activity helps fulfill current needs and more importantly ensures a sustainable supply of professional foresters who can support the woodlot sector.

4. **Enhance fire and pest protection on private woodlots.**

Currently, the Province is responsible for fire and insect suppression when emergency conditions or outbreaks occur. We propose this continue and that enhanced fire and pest protection on woodlots mean:

Funding will be allocated toward woodlot infrastructure and vegetational features that minimize the occurrence or spread of fire or pests. In terms of fire, this might include the creation of fire ponds, access roads, or vegetation barriers within or around stands to enhance fire suppression or limit fire spread. In terms of pests, this might include things like maintaining a hardwood presence in balsam fir stands to minimize the occurrence, growth or spread of spruce budworm.

To date, we have not proposed how much funding should be allocated to the various 'Uses of the Fund', but an approach is needed.

We have however proposed how a forest woodlot extension program might look to implement woodlot owner engagement in management plan development (use #2), and an education

program (use #3) to support it. NB DNRED has initiated a 3-year pilot program in forest extension in which:

- There will be 1 forest extension professional position for each Marketing Board, and
- A forest extension certificate continuing education program will be developed and delivered by the Maritime college of Forest Technology (MCFT).

As we continue to work with NB DNRED to define what the uses of the fund mean, we would like your thoughts.

Our aim is to ensure funds from the Private Woodlot Sustainability Fund are meaningfully allocated to support your individual and collective needs and desires.