

Legislation passed to support private woodlot owners

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FREDERICTON (GNB) – The provincial government has passed legislation that will allow additional royalties to be collected to add to the Private Woodlot Sustainability Fund starting this summer.

The fund will be used to bolster efforts to improve the management of private woodlots, contribute to environmental conservation, recreation as well as quality of life.

“Our forests are a vital part of our economy and environment,” said Natural Resources and Energy Development Minister Mike Holland. “Considering private woodlots make up 30 per cent of our forests, a productive, well-managed private woodlot sector is important for the overall health of our economy and environment, the quality of life of woodlot owners, and a vibrant and sustainable forest industry.”

The *Private Woodlot Sustainability Act* allows the government to make upward adjustments to Crown timber stumpage so that more money can be invested in private woodlots. This will provide woodlot owners with improved services.

“We are very pleased that this government is making a commitment for significant investment in the private woodlot sector in this manner,” said Rick Doucett, president of the New Brunswick Federation of Woodlot Owners. “It has been difficult for woodlot owners to perceive their future with optimism and confidence as past government initiatives have eroded their ability to do so. This is an excellent step in restoring that optimistic outlook for the future. We look forward to continuing the work with government on the challenges facing private woodlot owners here in New Brunswick and we applaud this government for taking positive action on this important file.”

The funding is intended to build confidence among private land contractors and expand the long-term supply of fibre for the province’s wood processing facilities.

“Our vision is to have private woodlot owners well supported in managing their property and helping the long-term sustainability of this resource. There are challenges in the private woodlot sector that need to be addressed and this work requires funding,” said Holland. “The Private Woodlot Sustainability Fund will support better management of private woodlots.”

People looking for more information on the fund or with suggestions related to the management of private woodlots can email privatewoodlots@gnb.ca.