



Rocky Mountains of Western Canada, Foothills Research Institute, Canada

## The Canadian Model Forest Network

### Development of the Canadian Model Forest Network

The Model Forest concept was developed in Canada in the early 1990s by the Canadian Forest Service in response to a need for a forest management approach that would take into account the environmental, social and economic aspects of the forest. Canada’s Model Forest Program was announced in 1991 and an initial 10 Model Forests were selected through a competition.

Since then, a number of additional Model Forests have been developed and others have completed their work and no longer exist. Today, the Canadian Model Forest Network (CMFN) is a not-for-profit corporation with a Board of Directors and 15 member Model Forests. The Model Forests encompass 125 communities and involve more than 1 100 forest stakeholders. Canadian Model Forests cover more than 65 000 000 hectares, with representation in all Canadian provinces. Over 270 indigenous and non-indigenous communities (amounting to a population of more than 975 000) are involved with Model Forests across Canada. The CMFN’s vision is “Sustainable Forests; Sustainable Communities,” which truly reflects the goals Model Forests are looking to achieve.

### National Focal Areas for the Canadian Model Forest Network

Every Model Forest is unique, with respect to its priorities, community characteristics, partners and activities, but many similarities do exist. The CMFN works to bridge the commonalities between its members by finding programs that are of interest to a number of regions, forest-based communities and partners. From this process, a suite of national, network-level initiatives has emerged.



Two early programs that achieved success focused, on local-level indicators of sustainable forest management and on engagement of woodlot owners and managers of small forested lands. Currently, the network has the following seven national-level strategic initiatives.

## Bioenergy

Resources are being developed to assist communities considering developing bioenergy facilities, including a guidebook that will provide an overview of current information, research and policy, and a web-based source of policy information and case study examples of current activities. A planned project is the development of a tool that will allow communities to assess the potential success of a bioenergy facility in their region.

## Canadian Circumboreal Program

Model Forests based in Canada's boreal region are developing partnerships with Model Forests in other circumboreal countries around the globe. They are working to address forest management issues in the context of concerns such as climate change and changes in the forest sector.

## Community Transition and Development

The network is developing a workbook to help leaders in resource-dependent communities assess current conditions, as well as choose the best methods for addressing current and future challenges they face with respect to changing economic conditions.

## Ecological Goods and Services

Through collaboration with the Canadian Federation of Woodlot Owners and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the network is exploring incentives and markets for protecting ecological goods and services, and options for offsetting the costs of voluntary actions of forest managers, landowners and farmers. The program will include a number of local-level projects across Canada, as well as examining options for policy development.

## International Knowledge Transfer

The CMFN will continue to share its experiences with other members of the International Model Forest Network and seek to learn from members of other regional networks. Canadian Model Forests are currently involved in collaborative projects with Model Forests in Argentina, Cameroon, Chile, Costa Rica, Russia and Sweden.

Top: A moose in Manitoba Model Forest, Canada

Bottom: Collecting birch sap to make syrup in Nova Forest Alliance, Canada



## Non-Timber Forest Products

The network produced a report on non-timber forest product (NTFP) activities in Canada, supported workshops across the country and recently released a report summarizing the workshop discussions on challenges and solutions in creating and meeting demand for NTFPs.

## Youth Education and Training

The Youth Education and Training initiative encourages young people from Canadian communities, and in particular from indigenous communities, to develop new skills and find opportunities in the new forest economy, allowing them to bring their important perspectives to future forest management planning processes.

## Looking Forward

Over the past decade, the forest sector in Canada has undergone an economic crisis that has profoundly affected rural communities. Members of the CMFN have taken a lead role in redeveloping the economies of Model Forest communities, focusing on capacity building and helping to develop integrated, multi-sector approaches to forest management.

Through research and other activities to advance the many aspects of sustainable forest management, Canada's Model Forests will continue to develop resources, connect stakeholders and provide expertise and knowledge-sharing opportunities for forest-based and resource-dependent communities, both within and outside Canada. This will support communities in addressing challenges and making wise decisions, now and in the future.

## Milestones

- 1991** Canada's Model Forest Program announced by the Government of Canada
- 1992** 10 Model Forests launched across the country  
Canada's Prime Minister announces the International Model Forest Program and, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, invites other countries to join Canada in establishing Model Forests
- 1993** Canadian Model Forest Network Secretariat established at the Canadian Forest Service
- 1997** Waswanipi Cree Model Forest established (the first indigenous-led Model Forest to join the CMFN)
- 1998** Nova Forest Alliance established
- 2002** Long Beach Model Forest closes
- 2004** Prince Edward Island Model Forest project established as an adjunct of Nova Forest Alliance
- 2006** Canadian Model Forest Network becomes a independent NGO with a Board of Directors
- 2007** Bas-Saint-Laurent Model Forest closes  
Four new Model Forests join: Clayoquot Forest Communities, Lac-Saint-Jean Model Forest, Le Bourdon Project and Northeast Superior Forest Community  
Several Model Forests renamed or realigned:  
McGregor Model Forest becomes Resources North Association  
Western Newfoundland Model Forest renamed the Model Forest of Newfoundland and Labrador  
Foothills Model Forest renamed the Foothills Research Institute  
Waswanipi Cree Model Forest becomes the Cree Research and Development Institute
- 2010** Weberville Community Model Forest established, bringing the number of Model Forests in the network to 15



## CASE STUDY

### Building Relationships in the Northeast Superior Forest Community

In 2008, in recognition of the growing need to accommodate indigenous interests in all resource decision-making, the Northeast Superior Forest Community facilitated a relationship-building process between the mayors and the chiefs of the area. The resulting relationship between the municipalities and the First Nations in the Model Forest is unique in Canada.

The partnership has equal input into the Model Forest's activities, which include education activities for elementary school students, exploration of alternative energy products, development of non-timber forest products, and a blueberry network using a cooperative model.

## CASE STUDY

### Canada's Model Forests and Non-Timber Forest Products: Sharing Knowledge, Creating Opportunities



With conventional forest and other resource industries in decline in many parts of Canada, there is growing recognition of the need to identify alternative sources of income in forest-dependent communities, especially opportunities with limited ecological impacts. In addition to network-level activities, many of Canada's Model Forests have been involved in non-timber forest product (NTFP) projects:

- Lac-Saint-Jean Model Forest has a multi-year program for NTFP development, including an inventory of wild mushroom resources and a guide to edible wild mushrooms, an evaluation of the potential for collecting and processing birch sap, and promotion of joint production of trees and blueberries in an agroforestry system
- Resources North Association undertook a variety of NTFP-related projects in partnership with the Centre for Livelihoods and Ecology at Royal Roads University, Victoria, British Columbia, producing a national compendium on law and policy related to NTFPs, and a searchable online directory of key players in the sector
- Model Forests in Atlantic Canada were involved in the development of the first NTFP directory for that region, *From Our Atlantic Woods*. The directory includes NTFP producers and service providers from all of the Atlantic Provinces, as well as the state of Maine in the United States
- The Northeast Superior Forest Community is planning to create blueberry agroforestry production projects in each of the six communities within its territory



Top: Maple syrup from a certified forest in Eastern Ontario Model Forest, Canada

Bottom: Edible mushrooms growing in Lac-Saint-Jean Model Forest, Canada

CASE STUDY

## Achieving Forest Certification in the Eastern Ontario Model Forest



Since 1999, the Eastern Ontario Model Forest (EOMF) has worked with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) to develop a collaborative certification process for both private land and community forests. The process allows for numerous landowners and community forests to share the benefits and costs of certification by certifying their lands as one unit with one certificate. The certificate is managed by the Eastern Ontario Model Forest on behalf of the private owners and community forest managers. Their current certificate covers more than 6 500 hectares of privately owned forest and 35 000 hectares of community forest, including two distinct forest owners groups representing over 100 forest owners. The EOMF was also the first organization in Canada to sell FSC-certified maple syrup as a non-timber forest product.

Limerick Forest, FSC certified and an partner of the Eastern Ontario Model Forest, Canada



CASE STUDY

## Model Forest of Newfoundland and Labrador: Shining a Positive Light on Forestry and Education

To offset a decline in post-secondary forest education programs, the Model Forest of Newfoundland and Labrador and its partners have developed a series of teaching and learning tools to increase awareness of sustainable forest management among students in the provincial school system and the general public. The tools are available to teachers and forest practitioners in Newfoundland and Labrador to use in their classroom activities, with the goal of promoting a positive attitude towards forestry.

Above: Envirothon members from the Model Forest of Newfoundland and Labrador

CASE STUDY

## Foothills Research Institute: Understanding Grizzly Bear Populations

The Grizzly Bear Program of the Foothills Research Institute in Alberta provides knowledge and planning tools for land and resource managers to ensure the long-term conservation of grizzly bears. Key to its efforts are sound scientific field research, a focus on gaining practical results, and a large-scale or "landscape level" approach to grizzly bear conservation.



Grizzly bear research supported by the Foothills Research Institute, Canada



## CASE STUDY

### International Partnership Projects

Canadian Model Forests are working with Model Forests worldwide, sharing knowledge and expertise. For example:

- Manitoba Model Forest is working with the Reventazón Model Forest, Costa Rica, on ethno-cultural tourism by developing management plans and establishing capacity, infrastructure and technology to develop the business, as well as providing the training and education of youth and women for future leadership
- Lac-Saint-Jean Model Forest is working with two Model Forests located in Cameroon, to promote the harmonization of forest use and other integrated land management activities
- Prince Albert Model Forest is working with the Araucarias del Alto Malleco Model Forest, Chile as a bridge to facilitate information and knowledge exchange between the two Model Forest partners and develop a future collaborative exchange program



Members of Manitoba and Reventazón Model Forests working together



## CASE STUDY

### Canadian Model Forests Partnership: Establishing a Caribou Knowledge Network

A Canadian Model Forests partnership – of Manitoba Model Forest, Prince Albert Model Forest, Foothills Research Institute, and Resources North Association – has been working with researchers, wildlife managers and provincial government departments on woodland caribou research, management and recovery planning. The western populations of this species are listed as “Threatened” under Canada’s *Species at Risk Act* and these groups are working collaboratively to bridge the gaps between individual jurisdictions. This will allow the sharing of technologies and methods for research and stakeholder engagement, and will ensure that science informs land management decisions for healthy populations and recovery efforts.

Canadian Caribou

## CASE STUDY

### First Nations Engagement in Clayoquot

The Clayoquot Forest Communities is focused on economic diversification, innovation, the building of strong local institutions, and development of an ecosystem-based management approach to resource use. Five communities are involved in the Model Forest: the First Nations of Ahousaht, Hesquiaht, Toquaht, Ucluelet and Tla-o-qui-aht, and the Municipal Districts of Ucluelet and Tofino.