



About ForestNS

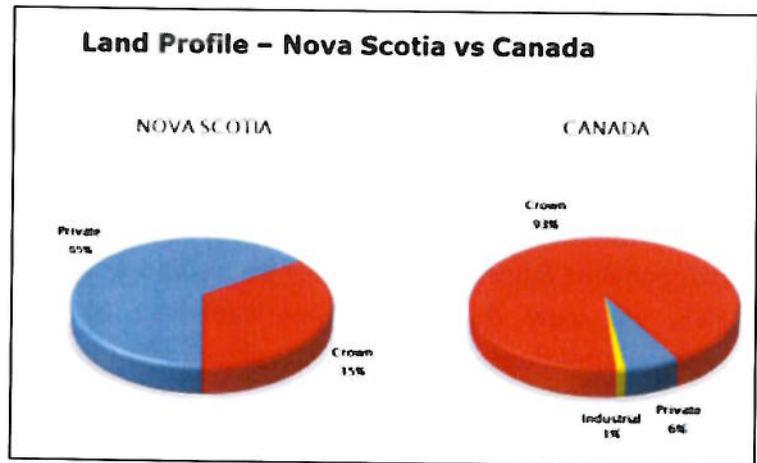
Forest Nova Scotia (FNS) is pleased to present this update to Nova Scotia’s MLAs and Municipal Leaders - providing context to the ongoing changes in Nova Scotia’s forestry sector, specifically in relation to the recently released “*Independent Review of Forest Practices in Nova Scotia*” (aka the “Lahey Report”) led by Prof. Bill Lahey.

FNS represents over 600 active members – small, medium and large private woodlot owners and forest land managers (85% of our membership); harvesting, trucking and silviculture contractors; sawmills, and pulp and paper mills. Our membership truly represents the forestry sector and has been doing so since 1934.

The forestry sector is a backbone of Nova Scotia’s economy – especially in rural areas. It employs more than 11,500 Nova Scotians, and generates more than \$2 billion in economic activity each year. As we know from the *Now or Never Report*, stable, sustainable businesses are needed in rural Nova Scotia more than ever before – and forestry can lead the way.

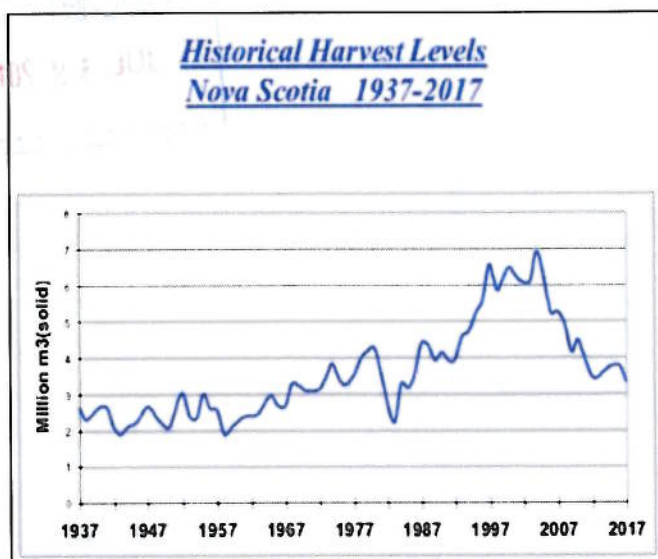
Context around Forestry

Approximately 75% of Nova Scotia’s land mass is forested which, as a percentage of total land mass, is the second highest in Canada. Despite the high percentage of forested land, forestry in Nova Scotia is unique and relatively small scale compared to the rest of Canada. Ownership of this forest land is significantly different than most of Canada with over 30,000 private woodlot owners owning approximately 65% of this forest and only 35% owned by the Crown.



This ownership of the forested land makes forest policy and regulations more complex as private landowner objectives and values need to be considered. Despite these challenges there has been significant progress in balancing economic, environmental and social values. Over the past 75 years Nova Scotia has had a number of forest policies and acts to guide the balancing of these

values - the *Small Tree Conservation Act* (1946), the *Forest Improvement Act* (1965), the *Royal Commission on Forestry* (1984) and now we have the *Independent Review* (2018).



Less than 1% of our forests are harvested annually, with more of our forests lost each year to natural mortality than from harvesting.

You can see in the chart on the left the annual provincial harvest levels over the past 80 years. Harvesting levels are at their lowest in over 30 years in this province - at a time when Canadians are using approximately 200 kilograms of paper products per person per year.

Improving Forestry Practices

FNS's membership consists of a diverse group of land owners, managers and forestry operators that implement land stewardship across a diverse cross-section of land holdings ranging from small private, large private, industrial private, and crown land forests. Throughout FNS's history, our association has been working diligently to improve forestry practices. Both our industrial and private memberships have been continuously adapting to more complex demands of our forests as a result of forest certification, forest policy and regulatory changes. With more complex demands being made our forest management standards and practices have evolved to consider multiple-use land management objectives that consider wildlife habitat, environmental footprint, and ecological sustainability. The newly proposed ecological forestry approach of the *Independent Review* can arguably be viewed as an emerging new forestry paradigm. For us at FNS, we view this as another evolution of change, where Prof. Lahey's report and recommendations will require our sector to continue adapting and changing our current forestry practices.

FNS supports a balanced approach to implementing the recommendations set forward by Prof. Lahey, and we are cautiously optimistic that these changes work for all interested stakeholders. We are willing to participate and engage with government with the spirit of the *Independent Review* and consider the *Private Lands Act* and *Environmental Goals and Sustainable Prosperity Act*, as well as a revised *Biodiversity Act*. Prof. Lahey's recommendations were assembled as a complete path forward, where he considered balancing the social, environmental, and economic uses of our forests.

Our forestry sector has significantly declined over the last 20 years with the loss of two pulp mills and dozens of sawmills, causing geographical market challenges for our industrial and private forestry sector. The remaining markets for our forest products in Nova Scotia are vital in supporting good forestry practices and healthy forest management. Therefore, we are ready to engage with our government as we move forward with an ecological forestry paradigm.

Implementing “Lahey” now

Let’s look at steps that have been taken by industry so far on the *Independent Review’s* recommendations, primarily on Crown Lands:

- The forestry sector has taken progressive steps to understand the *Independent Review’s* recommendations for implementation in the forest, including multiple visits and tours with report team members that provided advice on governance and harvesting techniques to understand theory and on the ground practices and how they are to be implemented;
- This year, over 65% of harvest block submissions on crown lands have been partial harvests;
- Worked through a new harvest block approval process that added double the amount of time for public consultation for new harvest plans;
- Implementing new interim retention guidelines reflective of the report’s recommendations;
- Implemented variable retention and irregular shelterwoods guidelines across the harvest spectrum, effectively eliminating overstorey removal and seed tree as harvest prescriptions on Crown land;
- Updating Old Forest identification criteria and planner training that may be built into forest management guides has led to over 50 forests being added to the province’s Old Forest objectives.

The *Independent Review* emphasises that we need to manage Nova Scotia’s natural resources to achieve a sustainable balance of economic, environmental, and social benefits for current and future generations of Nova Scotians. This is outlined through a triad approach to forestry and that triad includes protection, matrix and forest production designated forests.

- Protection on Crown Lands has been established but not finalized with greater than 30% permanently set aside, and 20% designated as critical habitat, non-operate buffers and other biodiversity and wildlife set-asides;
- Effectively we are implementing the matrix forest strategy on the remaining forest using the interim retention guidelines, as the production forest has not been designated on the landscape as of yet;

