



NAFA

National Aboriginal Forestry Association

Branch Office:

875 Bank Street

Ottawa, ON K1S 3W4

Ph: (613) 233 - 5563 / Fax: (613) 233- 4329

Email: nafa@web.ca / www.nafaforestry.org

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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National Aboriginal Forestry Association (NAFA) Signs Canada Forest Accord

February 21, 2006, Victoria – Dave Nordquist, Chairman of the National Aboriginal Forestry Association (NAFA), has agreed to sign the Canada Forest Accord today. This signing reaffirms NAFA's commitment to the 2003-2008 National Forest Strategy (NFS) of Canada, which is founded on the cooperative spirit of the Accord.

In June 2003, NAFA had expressed concerns about the limiting language in the Accord dealing with the issue of a lack of Aboriginal capacity and declined requests to sign it. At that time, NAFA agreed to participate in the implementation of the NFS as a non-signatory member of the NFS Coalition.

Since the NFS was released in 2003, NAFA has taken an increasingly active role in advancing the NFS – particularly Theme 3, "Rights and Participation of Aboriginal Peoples". As designated Champion of Theme 3, NAFA has fostered collaboration among a wide range of parties pursuant to the thematic action items. The action items include developing new institutional frameworks, incorporating traditional knowledge in forest management, increasing access to benefits from forest use, and building capacity in communities.

Today, NAFA has taken an additional step in the cooperative spirit of the NFS by signing the Canada Forest Accord. This will further solidify the developing relationships among stakeholders and the key role of Aboriginal peoples in building a sustainable future in the forests of Canada. NAFA will continue to promote initiatives that make the commitments of the NFS a reality for the Aboriginal people of Canada.

For more information contact:

Lorraine Rekmans, Executive Director

NAFA

(613) 233-5563