

NAFA



National
Aboriginal
Forestry
Association

Association
Nationale de
Foresterie
Autochtone

June 24, 2005

TO: All interested parties

RE: Implementation of the National Forest Strategy

This letter is to update you on the progress in the National Aboriginal Forestry Association's (NAFA's) work to implement the 2003-2008 National Forest Strategy (NFS) Theme 3, "Rights and Participation of Aboriginal Peoples". Many of you attended one or more conference calls and a consultative meeting in Winnipeg in early 2003, as NAFA sought direction for developing the Aboriginal components of the NFS.

As a member of the NFS Coalition, NAFA has assisted with the development of information for Aboriginal organizations across the country to inform them of the process and the potential impacts of work on the various action items in the NFS. NAFA has also coordinated and hosted four regional NFS meetings for Aboriginal organizations and hosted several teleconferences to report on progress and to achieve consensus on key principles and action items in the NFS.

In its final form, the new NFS is a boldly worded strategy that involves a broad set of partners in promoting sustainable forest management in Canada. The objective for Theme 3 states: **“Accommodate Aboriginal and treaty rights in the sustainable use of the forest recognizing the historical and legal position of Aboriginal Peoples and their fundamental connection to ecosystems.”** NAFA feels that this objective, and the seven priority action items that fall under it, present an excellent opportunity for Aboriginal Peoples to make significant gains on a number of different levels.

Following the finalization of the NFS in 2003, NAFA has attempted to move forward with several steps in order to implement the direction obtained from our members. As the designated Champion of Theme 3, we have participated on the NFS Evaluation Committee and led the development of indicators to support specific reporting on progress. The current version of the indicators will soon be available on our website (www.nafaforestry.org). We have also begun to form a team that will report on activities, identify gaps, and initiate new projects to address the gaps. In May 2005, funds were located to hire a full-time Coordinator for 6 months, and the result has been a significant increase in the pace of progress.

On June 28 and 29, NAFA will host the first meeting of the implementation team for Theme 3 of the NFS. The agenda for the meeting is attached to this letter. The team is a diverse mix of perspectives and regions, and we are continually seeking

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to expand its membership. Directions emerging from the June 28-29 meeting will be communicated to NAFA membership and other parties, to seek further input and ideas about how to implement. If you are interested in learning more about Team 3 or in becoming a member, please contact the Team Coordinator, Mark Kepkay, at (613) 233-5563 or mdkepkey@nafaforestry.org.

The road to implementing Theme 3 of the National Forest Strategy has been slow at times, but we are now gaining momentum. With our new Coordinator, we are able to push forward and also maintain communications with our members and other communities. NAFA looks forward to making significant progress on the NFS this year. More information is available either on the NFS website (nfsc.forest.ca) or from Mark. I hope that each of you will find a way to participate in this work.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Kepkay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

for Lorraine Rekmans
Executive Director