

VALUING OUR FORESTS – BEYOND CLEAR CUTTING A TOURISM PERSPECTIVE

Presentation to Forestry Alliance

Tourism Industry Association Nova Scotia

May 10, 2000

“What is a Tourist”

It depends on which Tourism or Economics text book you read, but quite simply TIANs's definition is – a Tourist is a person who is spending dollars in one community that were earned in another. Some of you here today are Tourists and I urge you to assist the HRM economy by purchasing as much as you can.

And what is TIANs? Founded in 1977, the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia is a private sector, not-for-profit organization that is the provincial advocate for the Business of Tourism. Today, guided by over eleven hundred members, TIANs' mission is “to lead, support, represent, and enhance Nova Scotia's Tourism Industry.”

The Human Resource Council of TIANs established its Sustainable Tourism Division in September 1993 to bring together stake holders from Industry and Government to work toward a sustainable tourism strategy for Nova Scotia. Our mandate has been guided by two words – Responsibility and Sustainability – how to maximize opportunities in a responsible way to ensure appropriate sustainable tourism activities.

A billion-dollar Tourism Industry in Nova Scotia depends on a healthy environment. The availability of fresh air, clean water and green space influences a traveler's choice on where to stay, eat, relax, and play. Adventure Tourism and Recreation, with its focus on nature travel and environmental integrity, needs healthy and attractive forests and protected wild areas with abundant wildlife through a variety of landscapes and land forms from the coast to the uplands. Our environment, how we use our collective resources, and how we care for our province's land and seascapes is a major factor influencing our visitor's perceptions and lasting impressions.

Forestry is also a billion-dollar Industry – Clearly, both Tourism and Forestry have equal economic importance and increasingly share a common resource. Both the Tourism and Forestry Industries need to be globally competitive. Both are export Industries and make huge contributions to the provincial economy, support our communities and provide tax support for health care and education.

The Tourism Industry is forest dependent. Therefore the Nova Scotia Tourism Industry is a stakeholder and needs to be involved in the decision-making process of land use management. – its 6,500 businesses and 40,000 jobs depend on our visual presence, our natural heritage.

The landscape of Nova Scotia reflects what nature and man have produced together.

This is what makes us attractive to visitors all over the world. This is what we market to the world.

Nova Scotia has become a destination of choice – a province for all seasons and is enjoying a Major tourism boom.

A positive and memorable tourist experience is based on striking a balance in maximizing development, allowing Industry growth and minimizing the depletion of natural resources.

As a visitor approaches Nova Scotia by air or car our vistas provide a first impression – just the same as a welcoming smile does when the visitor walks into a gas station, a food store, a bank, a restaurant or place of accommodation and needs to be involved in land use management.

We all worked hard to obtain the landmark protection of places and species. But it is not good enough. The province is the biggest landowner. Their report released earlier this week did not allow good stakeholder input. It is not strong enough in its recommendations. It is not enough to set aside protected areas as wilderness oases. It is not enough to have buffer zones alone as the panacea for clear cutting – one only needs to fly into Nova Scotia to see devastation that clear cutting has produced.

We need a plan, we need legislation, and we need to protect our inheritance to ensure we leave a legacy for the future. That is our responsibility.

The effect of clear cutting, minimal buffer zones on the ascetics of the province's view plains and vistas is very obvious to all. One of the hidden harms is the effect on the fresh water fishing, adventure tourism and all nature based activities.

A salmon caught on the Margaree is worth over \$3000.00 a pound to the NS economy.

I use the Margaree because on mainland Nova Scotia in the year 2000, through poor planning, indiscriminate cutting, limited silvaculture and reforestation, there will be no rivers open for sport fishing – a practice, which for the majority of its enthusiasts is only sport – the majority, catch and release.

That will have a major impact on recreational tourism and forestry.

The Forestry Industry is killing itself – streams, which supported fishing, also supported the transport of logs and are now shriveled to a trickle status. This also affects our drinking water supply. We don't have to worry about selling our water, it's disappearing.

Clear cutting has a huge environmental effect on changing the natural watershed areas and effecting properties far away from the actual devastation.

There is a huge demand for forestry products and the forces of supply and demand must be controlled to look at protection and examining impacts – taking a holistic viewpoint and working together to find new ways of creating a marriage that is amenable to all – not all take and not all give.

In British Columbia, we have an anomaly. A recent report of the future of the Forestry Industry ignored the Tourism Industry as a partner, critiqued the Industry's concern to be a priority at land and resource planning tables, and called for government to clarify how other Commercial/Non-Commercial interests could be accommodated better. Yet last week Clayoquot Sound – a long fought over battle between environmental and forestry interests – has been declared and designated a United Nations biosphere reserve.

In Richmond Hill, a community 100 km north of Toronto, the Oak Ridge Moraine that feeds the Rouge and Don Rivers is in jeopardy from developers. Residents fear the effect on the watershed, drinking water, bird habitats.

In Newfoundland there is a desperate conflict over jobs vs. old growth forest preservation. The Main River's lush watershed areas include one of the Island's last remaining stands of old growth forests. The Tourism Industry Association in Newfoundland like TIANS is not anti forestry, is not an environmental activist group, - they are simply calling for an environmental impact study and know that the planned clear cutting of 1500 hectares will indeed endanger the pine martin, already on the endangered species list, whose home is in the Main River watershed.

Beyond clear cutting implies a need for vision and value.

Always measuring by economic value is shortsighted and is short-term gain for long term pain. If forest ecosystems were assessed in economic terms for their "free" goods and services: clean air; water and healthy soils: climate regulations and wildlife habitat, their value would be well in excess of any existing Industry sector.

Today, Tourism is anxious to be a partner in planning for the future that will include the celebration of our natural heritage. We want to be part of a partnership and we challenge all the stakeholders to be visionaries.

The issues, ladies and gentlemen are management, respect, responsibility and partnership.