

Letter to the Editor

The Future of Nova Scotia's Forests Important to Tourism

Thursday, July 22nd, 2010

EVERYONE who cares about the future of Nova Scotia's forests, minerals, parks and biodiversity should closely follow the current progress of the three-stage process to develop Nova Scotia's natural resources. With the release of the Steering Panel's report on May 7th, the second phase of the Natural Resources Strategy Review is now complete.

The forestry section of this report has generated controversy as the three-person expert panel for forests was divided and submitted two separate reports on forestry management in Nova Scotia. One report calls for changes to the current forestry policies which are unsustainable. The other report suggests more decision making be with the private landowners' right to decide when and where to harvest forest products.

The Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) supports a balanced and progressive approach that protects the future of the province's forests. Beautiful scenery, interesting history/culture, hiking/walking and nature based tourism activities are some of the reasons people visit Nova Scotia. Our natural product is at the core of creating a unique and desirable tourism destination.

While the final strategy is still under development, this is the first time that a comprehensive forest strategy review has been done in Nova Scotia since the early 1980's. This is a great opportunity to move from the status quo and implement positive changes that will serve Nova Scotia well for years to come. Tourism in Nova Scotia is dependant on the health of our forests for its long-term sustainability.

The tourism industry in Nova Scotia generates \$1.8 billion in revenues, provides nearly 40,000 jobs, and contributes \$225 million in federal, provincial and municipal taxes.

Darlene Grant Fiander