

Education, Communications, Tech Transfer and Public Awareness

The best or newest information is not always readily available to the people who may need it. Within the forestry sector there tends to be some degree of frustration amongst workers and professionals regarding the communication and dissemination of research results that may positively influence forest management practices. There is also a desire on the part of the general public to have better and more comprehensible information with respect to forest ecology, forestry and forest science.

Given this well identified need by markedly different audiences for better education, good communication, and effective knowledge transfer the Lake Abitibi Model Forest is very active in the development and delivery of special events such as workshops and conferences, as well as the production and distribution of educational and knowledge transfer publications.

Model Forest Challenge for Guides and Scouts

Girl Guides of Canada, Scouts Canada, and the Canadian Model Forest Network have partnered to design a Model Forest Challenge that Guides and Scouts may earn. There are two versions of the Model Forest Challenge the junior version and the senior version. The purpose of this challenge is to learn about Sustainable Forest Management, and the work being done in this area by the Canadian Model Forest Network.

Guiders were introduced to the Model Forest Challenge as a northern Ontario pilot project in 2003 at a conference held in Timmins. Fran Côté, a Guider from Iroquois Falls, and a member of the LAMF Board of Directors, and her associate Silvia Aird-Verheyden were instrumental in developing this challenge Crest using financial and material resources from the LAMF.

The pilot has been a great success (approximately 200 guides have completed the challenge in Northern Ontario) and will now be extended to Scouts Canada and kits distributed across Canada.

Model Forest Week

Model Forest Week has been one of LAMF's most successful undertakings. During this week-long activity, elementary school students from local communities spend one day outside at the Wade Lake Ontario Ranger camp learning about sustainable forest management, ecosystem management, and the importance of the inter-connections of air, water, soil, vegetation, animals, insects, reptiles and humans. Volunteers from the local community make presentations on these topics. The children are rotated from station to station throughout the day. At the end of the day, the students get an opportunity to plant a tree in a special Model Forest Week plantation.

Because students are accompanied by their teachers, teacher volunteers, principals, as well as parent volunteers, the audience reached by this LAMF activity is much broader than the students.

Student Plot Project

This is a multi-year project that began in 1999. Iroquois Falls Secondary School is participating in a pilot project in partnership with the Lake Abitibi Model Forest, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Abitibi-Consolidated, to perform research and collect data about our forests. This innovative project, sponsored and organized by the Lake Abitibi Model Forest, teaches Geography students important research skills and an appreciation for the complex issues involved in forest management.

Growth and yield technicians and professionals with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources Science and Information Branch, guide students through the process of establishing a growth and yield permanent sample plot including, among other things, gathering information on the quantity of snags (standing dead trees) and measuring tree height, diameter and density in the 6,400-square meter research plot. Students identify tree species and tag trees over a specific diameter, taking height and age measurements, evaluating the health of vegetation, taking inventory of shrubs and herbs and collecting soil samples.

Students will use the data collected to complete forestry projects for Kevin Robinson's Geography class. Working in groups they will gain experience using computer programs to help them analyze and represent their findings in graphs. Mr. Robinson, a member of the LAMF Board, has been instrumental in the continuing success of this project.

The area of forest where the students will collect their data is set aside by Abitibi-Consolidated, holder of the sustainable forest management license for the area, specifically for the project. Plots were chosen, not only for representation, but because of its relative ease of access by students resulting in minimal transportation costs.

The project has been beneficial to all involved – the OMNR uses the data collected for their growth and yield program, students get hands on experience in scientific research, and the community is involved in monitoring the forest. One of the great successes of this project has been the number of past student participants who have gone on to post secondary education in forestry and natural resources management.

Northeastern Ontario Temperate Forest Foundation Teacher's Tour

Since the early 1990's the Temperate Forest Foundation has been conducting 3-day intensive tours for science teachers from grades 3-8 during the summer. In 2001, the Forestry Research Partnership (FRP) hosted a Teacher's Tour in Mattawa at the Canadian Ecology Centre. This was a very successful event to which the LAMF donated complimentary copies of our publication "Mysteries of the Boreal Forest" for each teacher.

The LAMF has attended and actively participated in the tour since 2002. Staff and board members have participated in both the French and English tours. This has provided invaluable opportunities to educate the teachers in sustainable forest

management on a one-to-one basis. The LAMF also has a display set up during their forestry career event, and also have opportunities to make one or more presentations during the event.

For more information visit: <http://teacherstour.canadianecology.ca/>

Boreal Summit

On May 7th and 8th, 2003, the much anticipated Boreal Forest Summit and Expo was held in Timmins at the Senator Hotel. The event was intended to be dynamic, and focused on solutions; serving to stimulate and catalyze economic opportunities and to improve the lives of northerners through the sustainable development and management of the boreal forest. Specifically, the Summit looked at bio products and non-timber forest products, resources based tourism, and value-added wood products that could be produced or derived in the North. As part of a National Forest Week initiative, the Summit also included an Exposition of forestry equipment, tools, and technology that was held on May 9th and 10th at the McIntyre Arena.

Speakers included representatives from industry, academia, and several levels of government, consulting firms, and non-government organizations. During the final day of the Summit, a workshop was held to better develop and synthesize approaches to establishing resource-based tourism businesses in the North.

Although led and coordinated by our Model Forest and Canadian Trade-Ex in Timmins, the Boreal Forest Summit and Expo 2003 had many sponsors and supporters including FedNor, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Natural Resources Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Columbia Forest Products, Nexfor, Weyerhaeuser, Abitibi-Consolidated, Grant Forest Products, and Tembec.

Boreal Conference (North American Boreal Conference 2006)

This can link directly to a new window: <http://www.borealconference2006.ca/>

Educational Activities at Camp Bickell

The LAMF has been assisting in the delivery of outdoor education to grade six students from schools in District School Board Ontario Northeast for a number of years. The activities take place at school organized outings to the recently renovated outdoor education facility at Camp Bickell near Iroquois Falls. The outings take place in May and June and involve 2-day class trips to Camp Bickell to meet specific objectives of the Ontario Science curriculum.

This project provides an opportunity for the LAMF to promote local involvement in sustainable forest management and to provide educational materials for the students to take home or back to the classroom.

Science Village

This project provides the opportunity for the LAMF to become an active partner and a known organization to the science community in Timmins and area. This project also

provides the opportunity for LAMF to establish a permanent display at Science Village if it is approved and built, thus providing educational opportunities for the general public regarding SFM. A contract for the feasibility study was awarded for Science Village. This is to be completed by early fall 2005. FedNor and DSBONE funding was secured for the study. Consultants visited Cochrane and Iroquois Falls for support of the concept. Consultants draft report has been completed and is being reviewed by the Science Timmins Board of Directors.

Regional Science Fair

Through this project, Lake Abitibi Model Forest has an opportunity to partner with the Timmins Regional Science Fair by donating annually an award for the best projects in the Environmental Science Category. This is called the Lake Abitibi Model Forest Environmental Science Award and consists of a cheque plus a certificate for each of Junior, Intermediate and Senior categories. The LAMF will also set up and staffs its display unit at the fair.

Boreal Mixedwood Demo Area Improvements

The LAMF is partnering with OFRI and NESI to improve the trails and signs at the Demonstration Area. This interpretive trail is used by the public to view the ecology and management of upland mixedwood sites in the LAMF.

Wally Creek Improvements

The Wally Creek trail provides an opportunity for the public to visit the boreal forest and learn about the forest drainage project. The turn-off at Wally Creek is one of the few places where travelers can actually safely pull off of Highway 652. Trail improvement started in the summer of 2004 with the help of the Wade Lake Ontario Rangers. Improvement of the trails will be completed in 2005 including new replacement signs for the trailhead and interpretive signs along the trail.

Local Library Project

The goal of this project is to ensure local libraries have recent LAMF publications on shelves and to sponsor the addition of new books to local library collections. In 2004 books were donated to the Attawapiskat High School and the Cochrane, Iroquois Falls, Matheson and Smooth Rock Falls Public Libraries. During March Break LAMF staff and Katimavik volunteers visited local libraries to talk with children about sustainable forest management.

New Projects in Progress:

Polar Bear Habitat: Indoor Climate Change Display

Polar Bear Habitat: Outdoor Rustic Display

Lake Abitibi Model Forest Promotional Digital Video Disc Production

Polar Bear Express Ecotour Brochure