



PRESS RELEASE

Quebec is lagging behind...

Forestry policies need great changes to bridge the gap with other provinces.

Montreal, June 15, 2004 - The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) and World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF-Canada) released a report today to the Commission for the Scientific, Technical, Public and Independent Study of Public Forest Management in Quebec (the Coulombe Commission). Entitled *Measuring Up: A National Evaluation, Comparison and Recommendations for Quebec's Public Forests*, this report gives Quebec's regulatory system a failing grade at protecting the province's environment from the impacts of industrial logging.

According to a thorough assessment of 17 indicators, the Quebec forestry system lags significantly behind that of Ontario and British Columbia. Forest management approaches developed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) for Canada's boreal forest – endorsed by the forest industry and conservation groups across the country – nearly doubled Quebec's score of 43.1%. "Quebec's forest management system is the only one that failed our evaluation" mentions Lucie Tessier, Forestry and Conservation Manager for WWF-Canada, Quebec offices. "This speaks of the urgent need for a profound change in our approach to forest management" she stresses.

The report shows that Quebec's current regulatory system is seriously flawed. The province needs to improve and expand its forestry policies and practices, particularly in the areas of independent auditing, the creation of protected areas, the retention of trees during logging for wildlife habitat and the management of the ecological impacts of road density. As it is now, Quebec's methods are out of step with the current thinking about ecosystem-based forest management in Canada. Chris Henschel, Manager of Forest Certification and Policy for CPAWS, stresses "The FSC standard and other jurisdictions in Canada provide compelling examples for Quebec to follow in fixing the many deficiencies in its forest management system". He adds that these inadequacies can be resolved, as can be seen in the stronger policies of other jurisdictions and in successful efforts of companies that are meeting the requirements of the FSC system and getting certified. "We can have forestry and conservation at the same time. It just takes creativity and the will to do the right thing," he adds.

This report provides the Commission with valuable insight on public forest management in Quebec. It contains specific recommendations to solve the issues and create a credible approach to forest management and environmental protection. “The government must make these changes to keep pace with market demands and growing societal concern for the state of public forests” said Henschel. “Quebec’s industry will not remain competitive in the changing marketplace if Quebec is allowed to stagnate while others move ahead to protect the environment”.

In the light of the Coulombe Commission’s vital purpose to define an “overall vision” of sustainable development of Quebec’s public forests, CPAWS and WWF-Canada call on the commissioners to propose nothing less than concrete and effective solutions to put Quebec back in the race for sustainable forestry in Canada – a race it is now clearly losing, with harmful social, ecological and economic harm ahead, unless it resolves to “be a winner” by taking the right action now.

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