

NAFA



**National
Aboriginal
Forestry
Association**

**Association
Nationale de
Foresterie
Autochtone**

October 26, 2006

TO: The forest community of Canada

RE: Update on implementation of the National Forest Strategy, Theme 3

This letter is the fourth in a series to update you on progress in implementing Theme 3 of the 2003-2008 National Forest Strategy (NFS), "Rights and Participation of Aboriginal Peoples." The National Aboriginal Forestry Association (NAFA) is the designated Champion of Theme 3. We are now over halfway through the term of the NFS, and from the start NAFA has been among the most involved participants. We invite you to join this work!

In June 2005, NAFA established a diverse team of parties interested in Aboriginal forestry ("Team 3") in order to promote the implementation of the Theme 3 action items. By early 2006, Team 3 had developed six working groups and a joint workplan, with the participation of federal governments, provincial governments, academics, forest companies, and Aboriginal organizations at both the national and the local levels. The Team 3 working groups address the following areas:

- capacity building for Aboriginal rights and participation in the forest sector
- Métis rights and participation in the forest sector
- sharing lessons and knowledge
- traditional knowledge in forest management
- Aboriginal trapping and sustainable forest management
- tracking and reporting on progress in Aboriginal rights and participation in the forest sector

In April 2006, Team 3 held an open national meeting in Ottawa to discuss needs and options for implementing the workplan. Attendance at the meeting was exceptional and diverse, and the discussion provided an excellent focusing function. Following the meeting, NAFA and partners proceeded to raise new funds and conduct research towards several key deliverables. By the end of the 2006-2007 fiscal year, we will have completed the following:

- establish a new "Forest Home" website, providing news, tools, and information about Aboriginal forestry in Canada (public launch was August 2006). The website address is www.nafaforestry.org/forest_home.
- publish a series of jointly authored discussion papers on the needs and options for building capacity for Aboriginal rights and participation in the forest sector of Canada.

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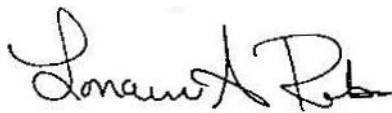
- publish an interim progress report on Canada's efforts to implement the Action Items of Theme 3 of the National Forest Strategy. (This report will also inform the reporting of the National Forest Strategy Coalition on all 8 themes of the NFS.)
- publish an update of NAFA's 2003 report, "Aboriginal-Held Forest Tenures in Canada."
- publish a discussion paper on the needs and options for developing a long-term national tracking and reporting system for progress on Aboriginal rights and participation in the forest sector.
- several other projects also still being discussed under the various working groups.

The current version of the NFS has gone further than any previous version in engaging the forest community of Canada directly in catalyzing progress on the action items. The established structure of thematic teams and Champions, together with the broad-based support of 67 members, has provided a unique opportunity to engage in multi-party discussions and joint initiatives that advance the action items of Theme 3. And the results so far are encouraging: We have improved the information available at the national level about the status and trends of Aboriginal rights and participation in the forest sector. We have also built a better understanding of key issues among the diverse members of Team 3.

Team 3 is open in its membership. We invite you to find out more and consider participating by contacting NAFA's Team 3 Coordinator, Mark Kepkay, at (613) 233-5563 or mdkepkey@nafaforestry.org. In addition, much additional information is available at the websites www.nafaforestry.org/forest_home/nfs.html and nfsc.forest.ca, including previous updates.

I look forward to working with you!

Yours truly,



Lorraine Rekmans
Executive Director