

Boreal Agroforestry Publications

At present there is very little published information to support the development and marketing of non-timber forest products in northern British Columbia. Agricultural producers, woodlot and other land owners in the north will soon have a valuable resource for planning and implementing the integration of non-timber forest products through agroforestry systems and wild harvesting on their private lands. The Boreal Centre for Conservation Enterprise with the support of the British Columbia Agroforestry Industry Development Initiative is developing regionally relevant publications featuring production and market research on conservation-enterprises for current and prospective agroforestry producers in the region.

The Boreal Centre is a not-for-profit association of people concerned with community development in the Peace River Region. The Centre's goal is to help improve livelihoods in marginalized northern, rural communities through the promotion of profitable, but ecologically and socially responsible enterprises. Support for the goals and objectives of the Boreal Centre has come from producer groups, all levels of government, elected representatives, First Nations leaderships, academic institutions, community development groups and financial organizations. The Boreal Centre has enjoyed the support of key partners over the past 5 years, including:

- Peace Value-Added Food and Agriculture Association;
- Peace River Organic Producer Association;
- Community Futures Development Corporation of Peace-Liard;
- Kiwanis Enterprise Centre (Dawson Creek);
- MLA Blair Lekstrom;
- Peace River Regional District and the District of Chetwynd;
- Moberly Lake Community Association;
- Sauteau First Nations and West Moberly First Nation;
- Sci-Tech North (Formerly Peace Liard Science Council); and,
- BC Ministry of Forests and Range, Peace Forest District.

Since its inception in 2000, volunteers and student assistants at the Boreal Centre have conducted market research on non-timber forest products. This information will now be made available as a new output of the Boreal Centre's Northern Innovators Business Development Initiative. The current work involves the final writing, editing, printing and distribution of two publications related to agroforestry enterprise (botanical forest products). The first is the "Peace Region Botanical Forest Products Guide" that provides detailed profiles on marketable botanical species found in the sub-boreal and boreal mixed black and white spruce ecological zones. The second publication is the "Peace Region Directory of Conservation Enterprise" that will feature profiles of entrepreneurs and organizations primarily involved in the production and/or marketing of products made from boreal non-timber forest species.

The "Peace Region Botanical Forest Products Guide" will include information on conservation-based rural enterprise, sector development issues, rural diversification opportunities in the north with emphasis on the emerging agroforestry sector. The guide will feature 30 boreal and subboreal plant species that are known to have market potential through value-added processing. Each species profile will include detailed information on species descriptions, commercial

applications, First Nations uses, accessibility, environmental sensitivity, market locations, harvesting specifications, customer requirements, prices, domestic cultivation potential, processing technology, government regulations and transportation costs. Species highlighted will include: alder, balsam poplar, birch, blueberry, clubmoss, cranberry, dandelion, Devil's club, red osier dogwood, hazel nut, horsetail, juniper, bearberry, Labrador tea, lodgepole pine, Manitoba maple, nettle, ostrich fern, wild rose, sweetgrass, sage, saskatoons, spruce, subalpine fir, sweet flag, tamarack, valerian, wild mint, diamond willow, and yarrow.

The "Peace Region Directory of Conservation Enterprise" will serve as a tool for linking buyers and sellers of value-added agroforestry products (woodcraft, food and furniture). The directory will contain detailed profiles of established businesses and marketing outlets where their products can be purchased. The directory will capitalize on the growing importance of agri-tourism and potential for it to support marketing of agroforestry enterprises. The directory will be made available at nominal cost through Chambers of Commerce/tourism outlets, business development organizations, agriculture/forestry associations, academic institutions, government agencies and other interested parties.

Workshops and guest speaking engagements will be held in conjunction with various interest groups (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, First Nations groups, agricultural organizations and producer associations) to highlight agroforestry production and business opportunities. These workshops will promote the new publications and conservation-based enterprise within the rural community and farm sector of the Peace region and will create additional information networks for product development and marketing.

These publications will generate a solid information base upon which producers can plan for new enterprises or expansion of existing production, thus strengthening and diversifying the local economies and creating new employment opportunities. Another important goal of this work is to help focus attention on the needs and aspirations of specific economically-marginalized groups in the region including unemployed youth and women, aboriginal groups and displaced agriculture and forestry workers. It is also hoped that these publications will help foster partnerships and joint ventures through agroforestry between First Nations, resource industries and provincial resource agencies. These groups have a vested interest in promoting new opportunities for aboriginal resource-users given existing Treaty rights over a shared, resource-base that is under intense local development pressure.

For more information on these publications or the Boreal Centre for Conservation Enterprise, please contact Reg Whiten at 250-788-9635, theborealcentre@hotmail.com, or mail Box 285, Moberly Lake, BC V0C 1X0