

AN INITIATION TO ECOFORESTRY DURING A WEEKLONG WORKSHOP

CONCEPT:

Ecoforestry is a low impact approach to forest management that maintains a fully functioning complex, diverse and productive forest. While preserving and mimicking natural ecosystem structures, components, dynamics and evolution, it favours eco-centric, democratic and fair management.

By appreciating aesthetic, spiritual, genetic, recreational and protective values, it favours multi-resource objectives, biological and economic diversity and high dollar/harvested bio-mass values.

Harvesting less volume than the forest growth rate, annually or in the long term is an example of an eco-forester's compulsory responsibility toward all life, present and future. (see www.ecoforestry.ca)

Ecoforestry is also quite compatible with the traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) generally associated with most Aboriginal cultures. The size and productivity of the forests of this continent that had so impressed the first arriving Europeans is proof of the high degree of First Nation's resource management and social economic organisation to any logical observer. Though few forests are or were entirely "natural", by many accounts, aboriginal cultures had eschewed destructive technologies, at least until a certain threshold of industrial colonisation had occurred.

CONTEXT:

Willi Nolan's "Good Life Gathering" in Harcourt N.B. yearly brings together a number of native and other youth interested in traditional knowledge along with Elders for various formative activities. As these "Gatherings" increase in popularity, young people have regularly expressed interest in forestry and forest oriented activities, but they are interested in a softer, more harmonious and respectful approach.

The youth are not unique in this, as a growing number of families and wood lot owners rejecting conventional forestry in favour of more holistic practices that will preserve and increase the family forest heritage. (see www.conservationcouncil.nb.ca and www.nben.nb.ca). The growing aesthetic and ecological requirements of forest families, tourism businesses of all kinds and rural municipalities and planners, are creating opportunities for young people with foresight to invest their time and interest toward providing forestry services with an ecological perspective.

GOALS

This on site practical and theoretical experience will not create experts. The study and training of ecoforestry is near worthless unless the good forester takes on this learning endeavour as a lifelong pursuit. However, it is likely that our holistic overview of ecoforestry will encourage those who have the calling to further their experience in more developed and established apprenticeships. Ecoforestry has already been implemented throughout the Maritimes at

places such as the Windhorse Farm Ecoforestry School in Nova Scotia and the forestry apprenticeship program offered by the Falls Brook Centre in New Brunswick.
(see www.windhorsefarm.org or www.fallsbrookcentre.ca)

Through the activities and presentations of this “workshop” the Good Life Gathering and Écoforesterie Gaspésienne wish to familiarise the interested participants with the concepts and the tools that are available for those who want to choose and build a career with a real future.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

- Sites 1- Conference tent
2- Forest trails
3- Stream area
4- Upper wetlands
5- House yard, open area

Day	Activity	Objective	Site	References
1 evening	Community supper (participants) Power point conference	Group formation and identification of objectives Quick overview of concept, theory and practices	1	Windhorse Farm, Falls Brook Centre, + others
2 morning afternoon	Trail visit. Orienteering techniques. Maps, aerial photography. GPS tech. Etc, Inventory techniques Evaluation and discussion of tourism potential. Overview of non-wood forest products	Comparison of perceptions and tools for cataloguing elements of our entrusted forest. Forestry and wildlife management techniques, Recreational identification activities. Food, medicinal, decorative and other uses of forest products.	2 3 4	Equipment manuals Bird, mammal, insect, mycological and botanical field guides.
3 morning afternoon evening	Soil comparisons: field, forest, wetland : strata, texture, structure, life... Tree ring sampling, identification of tree diseases, discussion of plant interactions and health Consultation with a traditional Elder	Local history, human activity and their effect on soils. Soil, weather, geographical influences, competition and other factors affecting plant growth Campfire discussion of traditional practices and attitudes and their effect on eastern forests.	2 3 4 5	County soil map Various textbooks Ex.: Harrar & Harlow Forest biology and dendrology educational sites (ex.: www.cnr.vt.edu)
4 morning Afternoon evening	Characterisation of forest stands Identification of wildlife tracks, scats, browsing, nests etc. Timber cruising the ecoforestry way: Campfire activities with Elder	Discussion of stages of succession, ecosystem restoration, phototropism tree structure and wildlife habitat. Maintaining a functional forest. Putting grandchildren before self. Increasing forest diversity, productivity and product quality. Elder’s point of view on various subjects	2 3 4 2 5	Ecosystem based planning, Spiritual values and land management, holistic cost-benefit analysis, Techniques of forest restoration & other Silva Foundation publications (see www.silvafor.org)

5 morning	Basic sawyer practice on a portable sawmill. Use and transformation of unconventional timber.	Basic knowledge of woodworking, types of cuts, effects of drying, behaviour of different species of wood.	5	Wood Miser magazines, other portable mill tech literature <i>Classic Post and Beam</i> , Jack Sobon
afternoon	Building a post and beam modular take-down instant cottage.	Economic advantages of first, second and third transformation of forest products.		
evening	Presentation	Career orientation possibilities	1	Windhorsefarm, Falls Brook Centre or Nagaya speakers
6 Morning	Review of the week's activities Discussion and personal views	Evaluation of the workshop Career and business possibilities, the future of ecoforestry, personal projects, etc.	1	

Note: The evening presentations can be moved to accommodate the invited speakers.

ABOUT THE ANIMATOR

Bob Eichenberger

I have College Diplomas in:

Agriculture : Macdonald College of McGill University, Sainte-Anne de Bellevue, Québec

Applied Ecology: Fish and wildlife management, as well as in

International Ecotourism: CEGEP La Pocatière, La Pocatière, Québec

Obtaining certificates in Worker Co-operatives and in wood finishing was fun, but my most valued experiences are the ones obtained in the field. I have worked on and off as an Arborist since 1972, did a lot of landscaping and plant nursery and garden centre work and did a few years of conventional forestry. But the turning points of my life were the months spent with Léonard Otis, the author of "Une Forêt pour Vivre" (A Forest to Live, ed. Pleine Lune) and the discovery the Ecoforestry Institute Association of Canada.

Since 1999, I have animated conferences, workshops and booths on ecoforestry, participated in the planning of a regional park, directed an outdoor centre, worked on eco-tourism projects in Québec and in Costa Rica and animated Katimavik, Young Naturalist and Stream Keeper activities with young people. I have and will continue to contribute articles to Aube magazine, various local papers and Elements, the NBEN magazine.

Always testing theory with action in the forest, I am a registered independent ecoforestry entrepreneur, (Écoforesterie Gaspésienne enr.). Presently, I am working on my own multi-purpose project on a 133-acre lot in the area of a village that was closed down. The vocations of this land will include permaculture, agro-forestry, ecoforestry, eco-tourism and educational activities. Windhorse Farm and Falls Brook Centre are still my inspirations in this work.

I have also produced an illustrated 237-page CD on ecoforestry (soon available in English) and authored a book (L'Écoforesterie, une science, un art, un projet de société) which will be available near the end of march. Only in French for now, however, since there no equivalents of the few excellent books that are available in English. The one I recommend most is the Ecoforestry Institute's: *Ecoforestry, The art and science of sustainable forest use*, (Alan Drengson and Duncan Taylor, Eds. New Society Publishers, Gabriola Island, B.C. 1997)

It will be my pleasure to give you all the additional information I can. Please contact me at

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