

Statement from Blake Brunsdon, Chief Forester, J.D
Irving, Limited - Company applauds Province of New
Brunswick's decision to have Crown Forests
independently certified by 2003

SAINT JOHN, April 9 /CNW/ - Today Premier Bernard Lord and the Honorable Jeannot Volpe, Minister of Natural Resources for New Brunswick announced that all Crown forests must be independently audited and certified by 2003. We think this is a very progressive step to ensure that Crown Lands are managed in a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable manner. We applaud the Government's initiative in this regard.

Today, all of the lands that our company owns or manages are certified under at least two of the three most recognized international forest certification programs. Our efforts with certification began back in 1994 at the request of one of our major customers. We believed then (and continue to believe) that independent audits by respected scientists and other experts is the right thing to do - for both business and the environment. The chart below details the acres/hectares certified to date in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Maine.

Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI)
All lands owned and managed in NS and NB (4.5 million acres)
1.5 million acres pending in Maine

International Standards Organization 14001 (ISO)
All lands owned or managed in NB, NS and Maine (6 million acres)

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)
570,000 acres in Maine

It is important to note that the standards and practices that guide us on the ground in our work throughout Maine, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are all the same - there is no difference. 570,000 acres of land that we own in Maine has been audited under the 75 criteria of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI), as well as ISO 14001 and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) programs. Our FSC certification earned the praise of the World

Wildlife Fund and the Audubon Society. Seven miles away from our Maine lands is ecosystem knows no boundary, the U.S.-Canada border is drawn between them. Black Brook was one of the first forests in Canada to achieve FSC certification in 1998, following four years of effort. && Since that time however, new local Maritime FSC standards have been endorsed that are very different from the Maine standards. In Maine an inclusive, transparent multi-stakeholder approach was used. In addition, a world class Technical Standards Committee of internationally recognized ecologists and forestry experts also provided input.

Unfortunately this was not the case for the Maritime FSC process. && As a result, we voluntarily cancelled our FSC certification in New Brunswick in June 2000. In the meantime, we have pursued our commitment to independent audits by respected scientists. These efforts are not “window-dressing”. Our woodlands teams in St. Leonard, Deersdale, Sussex, Doaktown, Chipman and St. George have spent the last seven years continuously improving, and opening up of operations and forest practices to the scrutiny of outside experts - forest ecologists, forest economists and forestry professors. This has not been an easy test, and we are proud of our team’s efforts and accomplishments.

Independent certification has been - and continues to be - a worthwhile process for us. This is despite a significant human and financial investment that brings no added premium on the market price of our forest products. Certification has meant a great deal of time, effort, hard work and change. We believe we are better for it. Building public confidence in our forestry practices takes more than our own words. Scrutiny by 3rd parties is a good science-based way to review, communicate and improve the work we do in the woods on an ongoing basis.

Independent audits, based in good science, are not the complete answer but a responsible and positive step in the right direction.

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