

For Immediate Release

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Ecology Action Centre welcomes results of Voluntary Planning Report on Natural Resources

Public demands change in Natural Resource management

“Nova Scotians made it clear that change must happen.... The current approach to natural resource management is not sustainable.” – Voluntary Planning

Voluntary Planning, the arm’s length government agency charged with documenting Nova Scotia’s concerns with forestry, mining, parks and biodiversity, released their final report on Friday.

Raymond Plourde, wilderness coordinator for the Ecology Action Centre, is pleased that Voluntary Planning has “captured Nova Scotians’ clear demand for change, not only to sustain our forests and biodiversity, but also our rural communities and economies.”

“This is a critical first step toward a new era of responsible stewardship in our province,” continues Plourde.

Voluntary Planning’s report is based on feedback from 2000 workshop participants and 600 written submissions. “A resounding call for change has been voiced. Current natural resource practices for all uses and all users are not sustainable,” Voluntary Planning concludes.

Jamie Simpson, forestry program coordinator for the Ecology Action Centre, notes that Voluntary Planning captured Nova Scotians’ desire to see a dramatic reduction of clearcutting, and an increase in silviculture and value-added forest products. “We hope this is the beginning of the end for indiscriminant clearcutting.”

Also clearly emphasized in Voluntary Planning’s report was the need for public involvement in resource management, and especially for ‘Crown’, or public, forest land. “The public should have a larger voice in the management of Crown lands,” VP states in the report.

“The report was unequivocal in the public’s desire for a permanent, legislated ban on uranium exploration and mining,” says Mark Bultler, policy director for the EAC. “The public also clearly does not want mines sited near sensitive ecosystems, parks and protected areas, and that the mining industry must reduce or eliminate pollution from mining operations.”

Surprising omissions from the report include any detailed mention of the impacts of climate change, and any specific highlights of coastal biodiversity, both issues that were reiterated numerous times by the public.

This report is the first step in a process to develop a new, 10-year strategy for managing forestry, mining, parks and biodiversity in Nova Scotia.

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The Ecology Action Centre is Nova Scotia's oldest environmental organization, and is dedicated to ecologically responsible resource management, and sustainable rural livelihoods.

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