

*February 5, 2009*  
*Telegraph-Journal*

## Province's new forest plan is dangerous

Megan de Graaf  
Forest Ecologist, Conservation Council of New Brunswick

On Friday, Premier Graham revealed the provincial government's new forest management plan. Although this plan was touted as being a "balanced approach," only industry representatives were smiling.

The new plan will nearly triple the area available for plantations (from the present 10 to 28 per cent). N.B. scientists recommend plantations not exceed 15 per cent of the land-base.

This means that herbicide applications will also increase almost three-fold.

The new plan will decrease the amount of old forest from 45 to 31 per cent at a time when scientists tell us that 40 per cent old forest is the survival threshold for species that depend on old forest habitats. The new plan will also reduce the area of conservation forest.

This means the area of special wildlife habitat zones will be cut by at least half. These habitats are critical to supporting wildlife populations.

The status quo management plan was scrapped because it was unsustainable (as evidenced by the 20 to 40 per cent reduction in hardwood annual allowable cut coming in 2012) and relied too heavily on a few narrow markets.

This new plan is little different. There's the same reliance on a few softwood species, the same strangling tenure system, and the refusal to plan for adaptation to climate change.

Demand for certified wood products is growing, but our provincial government chose to allot more public forest to be managed by methods that are not certifiable by the Forest Stewardship Council.

The plan is neither smart nor sustainable.