



Abercrombie Pulp Mill (file photo)

CFAC Take Steps to Help

By Maurice Rees

When the Northern Pulp mill in Abercrombie closed a year ago, Cumberland forest owners and industry participants figured they were in deep trouble. It was at that time, Jeff Black and many others stepped forward to organize the Cumberland Forest Advisory Committee (CFAC) to assess the depth of the problem and what could be done to save the industry.

At Cumberland Council's meeting on January 13th, Black who is co-chair of the group, outlined activities taken and accomplishments of the embryonic committee, which has attracted the participation of many foresters, industry participants and owners.

During his presentation he noted that Cumberland County forests provide 25% of the raw product harvested in the province, and a downturn would have a significant impact on the economy of all areas. He also added that 75% of Cumberland is forest land (800,000+acrea) and provides an economic impact of approximately \$25-Million per year.

During several decades the four major sawmills in Cumberland have disappeared, and although in recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of smaller portable band-saw mill operators. Co-chair Black forecasted



he does not see establishment of a major sawmill in the future.

Questions from councillors included did the lack of a major sawmill contribute to the shortage of lumber this summer. He replied the unusual circumstances were caused by a higher demand for exports to the United States, plus with the CoVid pandemic more homeowners got involved in renovations, and new house construction. All these factors caused a rapid increase in pricing due to inventory shortage.

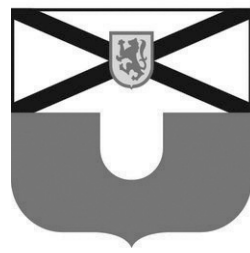
He noted that at one point during the summer there was not a single stick of 4"x6"x10' available anywhere in the province. He added, although prices have settled back a bit, the demand and pricing is much better than what was anticipated following the closer of Northern Pulp.

Black, a life-long Cumberland resident indicated several generations of his family have been involved in the forest sector and he will soon have served thirty-one years in the industry, and started his own company 22 years ago. Although his company pro-

vides a variety of services, trucking is the current priority focus.

He indicated CFAC has achieved several milestones during the first year and has attracted a large following from all segments of the industry. Citing a lack of media in the county, CFAC developed a newsletter; has had virtual meetings every second Tuesday; has worked closely with the provincial Forestry Transition Team; developed a strategic plan, plus numerous other accomplishments.

Following his presentation to council, preliminary discussions are underway for CFAC and South Cumberland News to work together to raise awareness and strive to have CFAC presence in each monthly issue. More details will be forthcoming in future issues.



Nova Scotia Teachers Union

Panel to Make Recommendations on Teachers' Pension Plan

The province and Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) have appointed an independent three-person expert panel to recommend ways to protect and strengthen the Teachers' Pension Plan.

The plan has an unfunded liability of \$1.5 billion and a funded ratio of 78.2 per cent as of Dec. 31, 2019. While there is no immediate risk the plan will be unable to meet its ongoing pension obligations, NSTU and the province, as joint parties of the plan, have a shared obligation to address the plan's liability so teachers, like other public sector employees, have pension benefits that will provide financial stability during retirement.

NSTU and the province agreed to the panel process in October 2020. The panel will consult broadly with teachers and other plan members, conduct education sessions about the extent of the deficit and options for resolution, and bring forward non-bind-

ing recommendations to make the plan fully funded within a reasonable period of time and within its framework.

Panel members were jointly selected based on their knowledge and expertise of pensions, specifically public sector pension plans. They are: Elizabeth Brown, a Toronto-based pension lawyer at Brown Mills Klink Prezioso LLP. Gale Rubenstein, a lawyer at Goodmans LLP in Toronto. Ms. Rubenstein has extensive experience with pensions arising from her practice as an insolvency lawyer. She is also currently the chair of the Ontario University's Pension Plan and was extensively involved in the restructuring of that plan and Conrad Ferguson, an actuary based in Fredericton, New Brunswick who had a distinguished career with Morneau Shepell before retirement. He maintains some direct involvement with the firm on a part-time basis.

Artist-in-Residence Program Celebrates 5TH Year

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Members of the 2021 selection committee were Odette Barr, author, illustrator and teacher from Southeast New Brunswick; Sara Jewell, award-winning narrative journalist, and memoirist who lives in Port Howe, NS., and Laurie Glenn Norris, the Education and Outreach Manager of the Joggins Fossil Institute.

The ArtScape Artist-in-Residence program benefits artists by providing the time, financial support, and space to enable them to better focus on their work. In return, the local area and Joggins Fossil Centre visitors have the opportunity to engage with the artists through studio visits, workshops and other public programming. The ArtScape:

Artist-In-Residence Program is sponsored by the Municipality of the County of Cumberland.

For more information contact Laurie Glenn Norris at 902-251-2727 ext. 224 or education@jogginsfossilcliffs.net.

Laurie Glenn Norris, M.A. is Education and Outreach Manager, Joggins Fossil Centre. She can be reached at: 902-251-2727

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South Cumberland NEWS

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