



Media Release

University of Manitoba researcher receives \$174,000 research award

Dr. Iain Davidson-Hunt will work with research team to consider the role of customary stewardship approaches for land-use planning and forest management in Ontario

Winnipeg, Manitoba, April 25, 2007 – Principal Investigator Dr. Iain Davidson-Hunt, Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba, will receive \$174,000 to coordinate a first-of-its kind project that considers an Aboriginal approach to adaptive management for Canada's forests. This award is part of a \$3 million investment over two years made by the Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) Network.

University researchers will work in partnership with Pikangikum and Moose Cree First Nations to consider how they could develop an approach for adaptive management rooted in aboriginal knowledge and institutions for sustainable forest management. This innovative new approach is supported by SFM Network partners Moose Cree First Nation, Government of Ontario and the National Aboriginal Forestry Association. It has emerged out of the context of the Northern Boreal Initiative in which the Ontario government works with First Nations who are leading land use planning for their traditional territories in the far north of Ontario.

SFM researchers have been working to increase communication and understanding of forestry issues among Aboriginal people, Canadian governments and industry for the past decade, and marks a major step forward to enhance the role of Aboriginal decision-making in the management of Canada's forests.

This work is critical to northern Ontario Aboriginal peoples as they develop land-use and forest management plans for their traditional territories. It will provide them with research support to create an approach for their forest management planning process with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources that is consistent with their values and customs. Both First Nations share similar social, ecological and economic challenges which have led to changes within their communities, including overcrowding, poverty, loss of fur markets, encroachment of southern industrial activities in their areas, and increased regulation of such activities as trapping, hunting and fishing.

"The goal is to create an approach that highlights First Nations' ways of monitoring social-ecological change, allows for cross-cultural learning amongst the partners and considers new approaches to resource management that are consistent with the goals of First Nations and the Ontario Government," explained Dr. Davidson-Hunt.

The project, for example, will include a workshop to explore Algonquian land-based values and how such values can influence contemporary land-use and forestry plans. This will provide a starting point to consider how First Nations' have been able to maintain continuity in the values that guide land-use in spite of changing economic activities. The team will work closely with and take guidance from Aboriginal elders, senior trappers, and those with customary authority for the management of Aboriginal relationships to lands and resources. It will also provide for exchange between Pikangikum First Nation and Moose Cree First Nation so they can learn from each others experiences.

The research advisory team includes Dr. Fikret Berkes, University of Manitoba, Dr. David Natcher, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Mr. Alex Peters and Dr. Michael

O'Flaherty, Whitefeather Forest Management Corporation, Mr. John Turner, Moose Cree Lands Secretariat, and Mr. Roy Sidders, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

About The Sustainable Forest Management Network

The Sustainable Forest Management Network facilitates collaborative, applied research partnerships among 32 industry, government, Aboriginal, and non-government partners in supporting the work of more than 190 researchers. Their research efforts are accomplished thanks to 300 highly qualified personnel working at 35 participating institutions across Canada. The SFM Network represents one of the few forums to bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal forest resource managers and policy makers around one table to promote dialogue and the development of a common understanding in a non-confrontational environment.

- 30 -

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