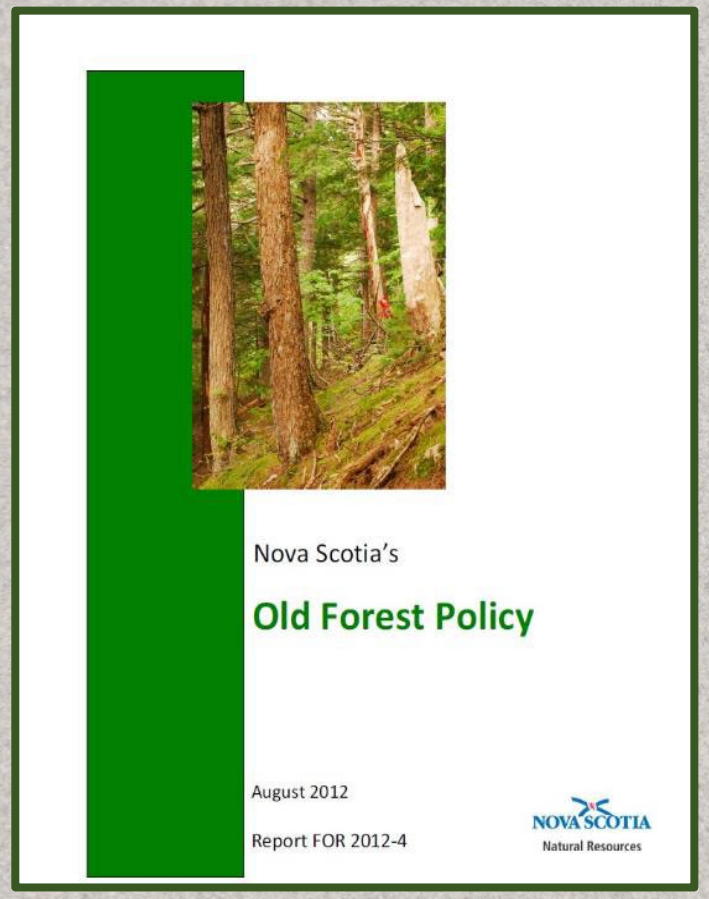
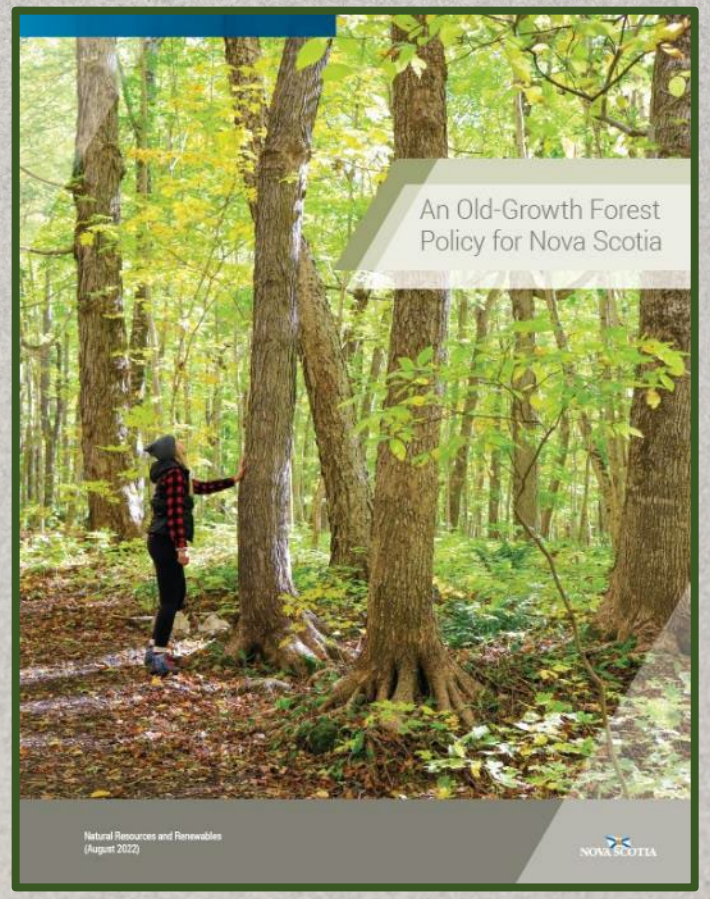
Out with the *Old*, in with the *New!*



Progress in Protecting Nova Scotia's Old Forests



Peter Duinker (Professor Emeritus, Dalhousie Univ.) & **Peter Bush** (OGF Coordinator, NS-DNRR)

April 2023

Topics for today >

- **Why is OGF so special?**
- **Why did we need an updated OGF policy?**
- **What was the process to get the update done?**
- **What does the new Policy say that's different?**
- **What's in the Policy for woodland owners?**
- **What do the next 4.5 years hold?**

Why is OGF so special?

We cherish them for such a diverse range of values, AND

They are now so rare!

Why is OGF so special?

The Bowater-Mersey OGF Study

Peter N. Duinker and Peter G. Bush
School for Resource and Environmental Studies
Dalhousie University

February 2009

Why is OGF so special?

The Open Forest Science Journal 1:27-36

Open Access

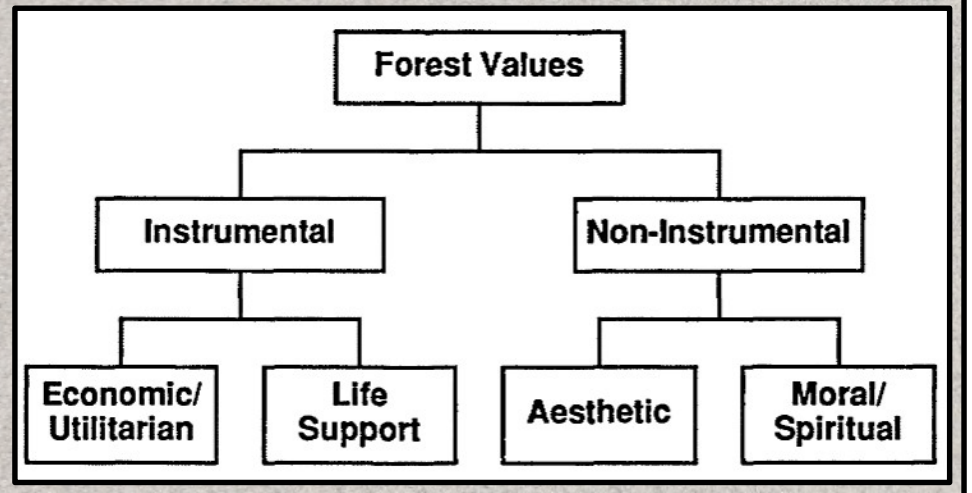
Forest Values: A Framework for Old-Growth Forest with Implications for Other Forest Conditions

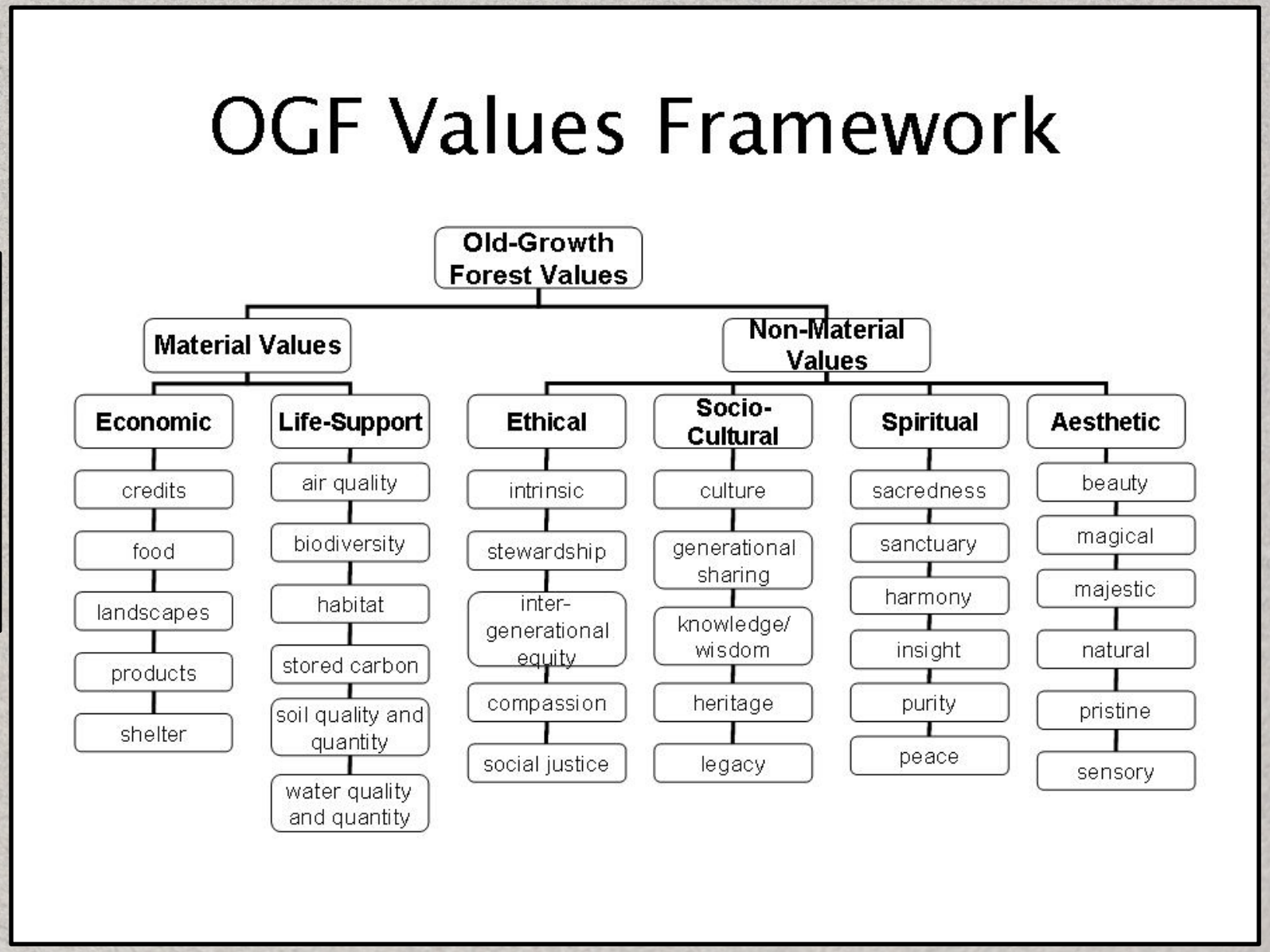
Joanne M. Moyer, Rochelle J. Owen* and Peter N. Duinker

School for Resource and Environmental Studies, Dalhousie University, Canada

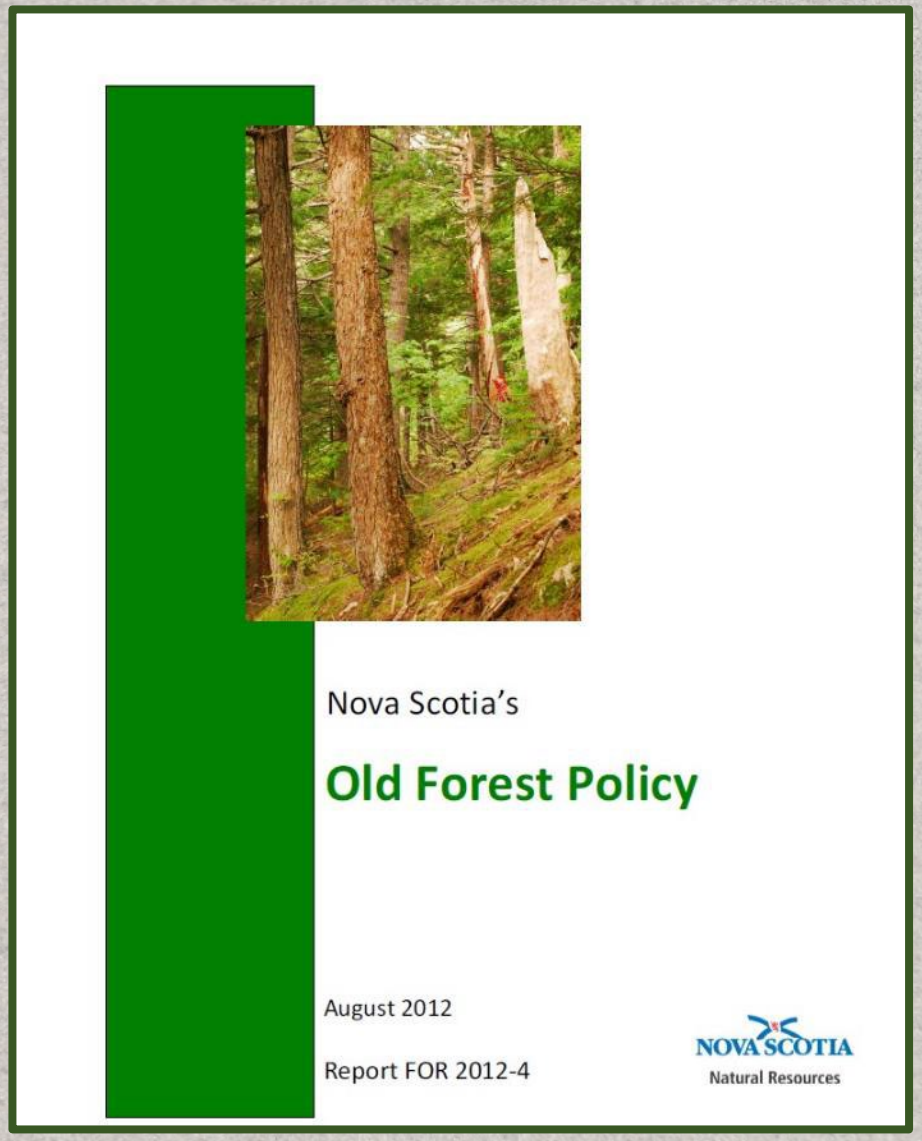
Abstract: Old-growth forests (OGF) in North America have declined significantly since European colonization. Many conflicts about basic values over OGF harvesting have occurred in recent decades. Understanding these values is an important component of addressing such situations. This paper is based on two studies of OGF values, which captured the range of existing values and the nuances that define them. Moyer conducted a narrative study with six leaders in Canada's forest sector. Owen conducted a series of nine one-day field workshops which included 76 participants representing citizen constituency groups in Nova Scotia. Insight gained from these two studies was used to build upon existing forest values typologies to construct a forest values framework with some unique features. The framework provides opportunities for immediate use and future research.

Why is OGF so special?





Why did we need an updated OGF policy?



Prof. William Lahey

An Independent Review of Forest Practices in Nova Scotia

Executive Summary

Conclusions and Recommendations

August 2018

Why did we need an updated OGF policy?

- **Lahey's Recommendation #17:**
- **Improve the abundance and conservation of old forests by:**
- **a. Implementation of ecological forestry**
- **b. Accelerated and improved data collection**
- **c. Reconsidering the area-proportion targets in the Policy, as well as potential inclusion of other tree species in the climax group (e.g., red oak, red maple)**
- **d. Adding old-forest restoration targets**
- **e. Developing a silvicultural manual for old-forest restoration**

What was the process to get the update done?

- **Old-Forest Project Team:**
- **John Brazner, PhD**
- **Peter Bush, PhD**
- **Peter Duinker, PhD (ext. expert)**
- **Mark MacPhail, BScF**
- **Matt Retallack, PhD**
- **Bruce Stewart, BScF**
- **Meaghan Pollock, MREM**
- **Former members:**
  - **Morgan Rice, MREM**
  - **Mark Pulsifer, M.Sc.**
  - **Emily Woudstra, M.Sc.F.**
  - **Ulrich vom Hagen, PhD**

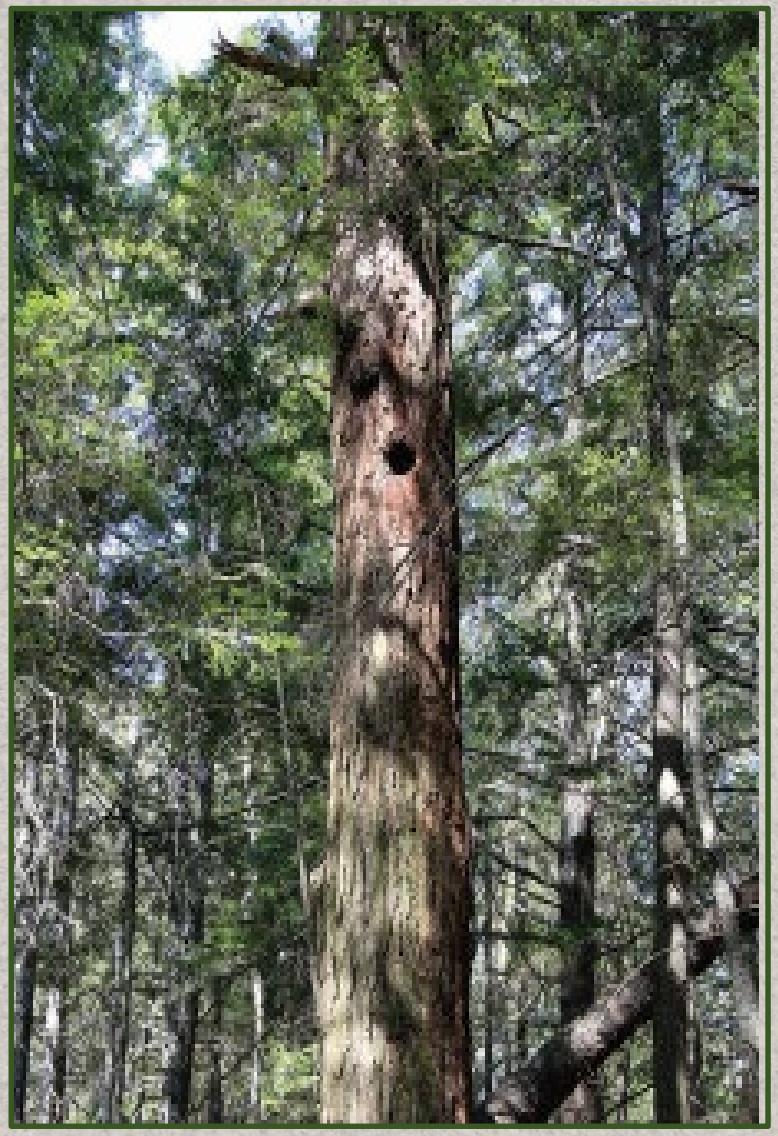
What was the process to get the update done?

- **Consultation Activities**
  - **Staff Consultation**
  - **Targeted Stakeholders (ENGOs and industry)**
  - **Minister's Advisory Committee**
  - **Other Government Departments (ECC, Energy & Mines, Transportation)**
  - **Mi'kmaq Consultation**
  - **Public Consultation (128 submissions)**

    - Consultation Report
  - **Independent Evaluation of Implementation of the Forest Practices Report**

- **Other Info Sources**
  - **Recent research papers**
  - **Jurisdictional scan**

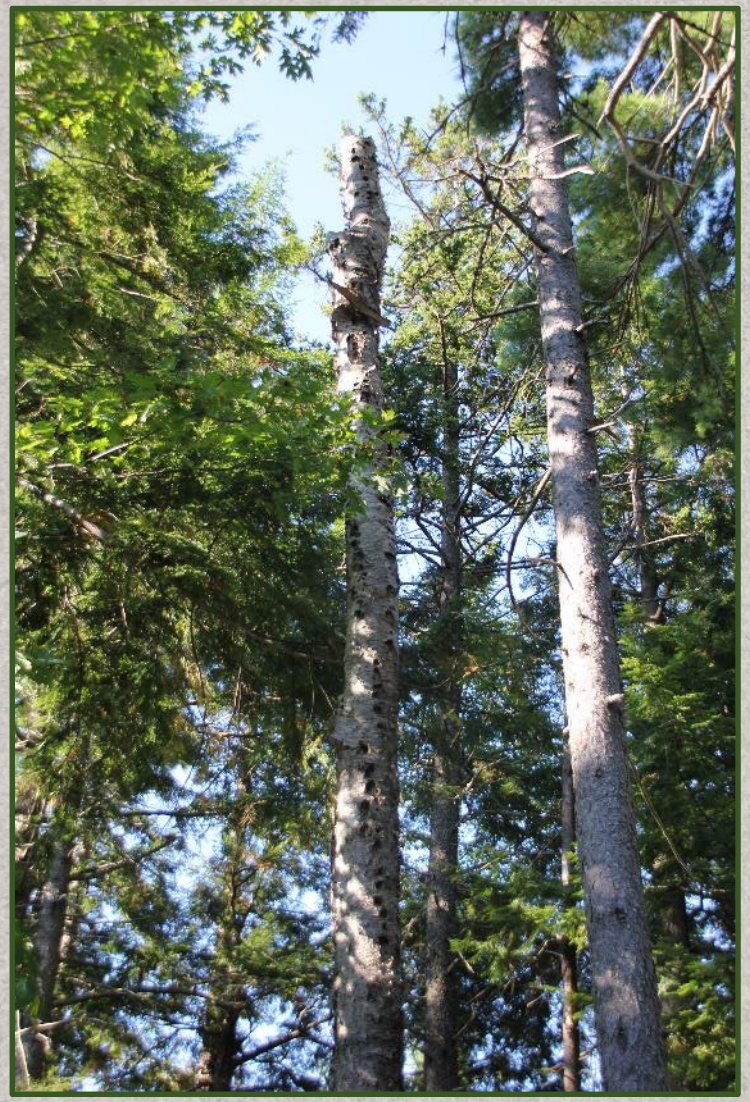
What does the new Policy say that's different?



Key Approaches:

- **Supports the overall approach to Ecological Forestry by prioritizing biodiversity for these uncommon and unique ecosystems**
- **Fits into the conservation zone of the TRIAD approach**
- **Incorporates new science, local expertise and traditional knowledge**
- **Supports voluntary conservation on private land**

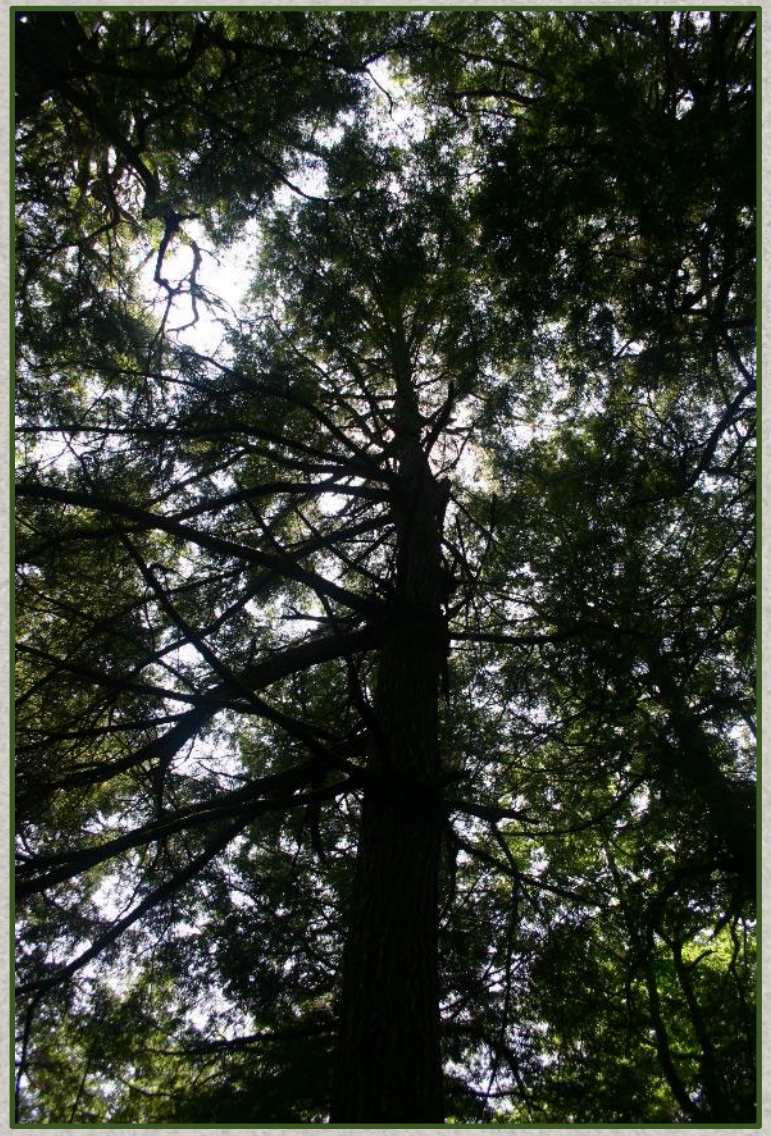
What does the new Policy say that's different?



Key Highlights:

- **Name change and focus on <u>old growth</u>**
- **Conserve *ALL* OGF**
- **Revised definition to follow an ecologically-based definition of late-successional forests and age**
- **Clarified definition to not include managed stands**

What does the new Policy say that's different?



- **Other Highlights and Changes:**
  - **Stronger language about any removal of policy lands and compensation for old-growth area removals**
  - **Clarified roles and responsibilities of Dept people with administrative authority**
  - **Stronger reporting and renewal language**
  - ***Stronger language for supporting private land conservation of old growth***

What's in the Policy for woodland owners?

- **6.0 Old-Growth Conservation on Private Land**

(a) work with private landowners to explore mechanisms . . .

(b) work collaboratively with land trusts . . .

(c) include old-growth forest as a priority criterion . . .

(d) provide informative documentation and offer field-based workshops . . .

(e) in reporting . . ., account for old-growth forest areas on private land . . .

(f) share data with all organizations to support old-growth forest conservation;

(g) develop a framework and criteria for accounting . . . of old-growth forest areas on private land

What do the next 4.5 years hold?

- **Review and renewal of the Policy by August 2027 (public and stakeholder consultation in the year leading up)**
- **Immediate development of new monitoring and reporting protocols**
- **Periodic public reports by the OGF Coordinator**
- **Headway on the commitments re: private land**
- **Coordination with NS-ECC on new protected areas**
- **Increased DNRR effort to find all OGF on Crown land**
- **Various research projects on OGF ecology and other topics**

Information

New Policy is effective August 18, 2022

Information here:
https://novascotia.ca/ecological-forestry/
and here:
https://novascotia.ca/natr/forestry/programs/ecosystems/oldgrowth.asp
and the video “Wandering through Ancient Woods: An Introduction to Old-Growth” here:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWkcBIc8dJM

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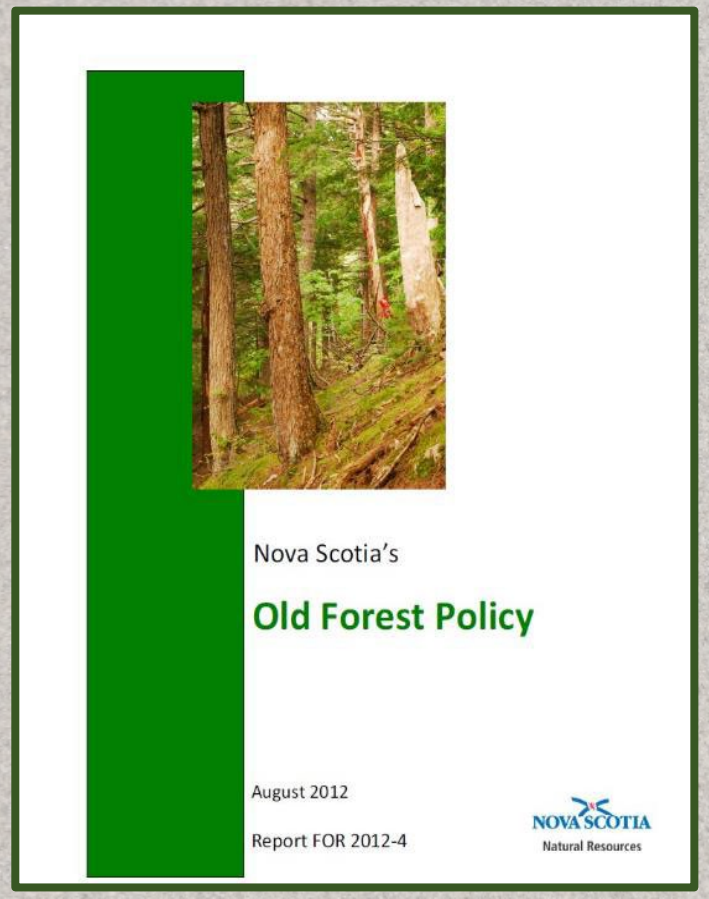

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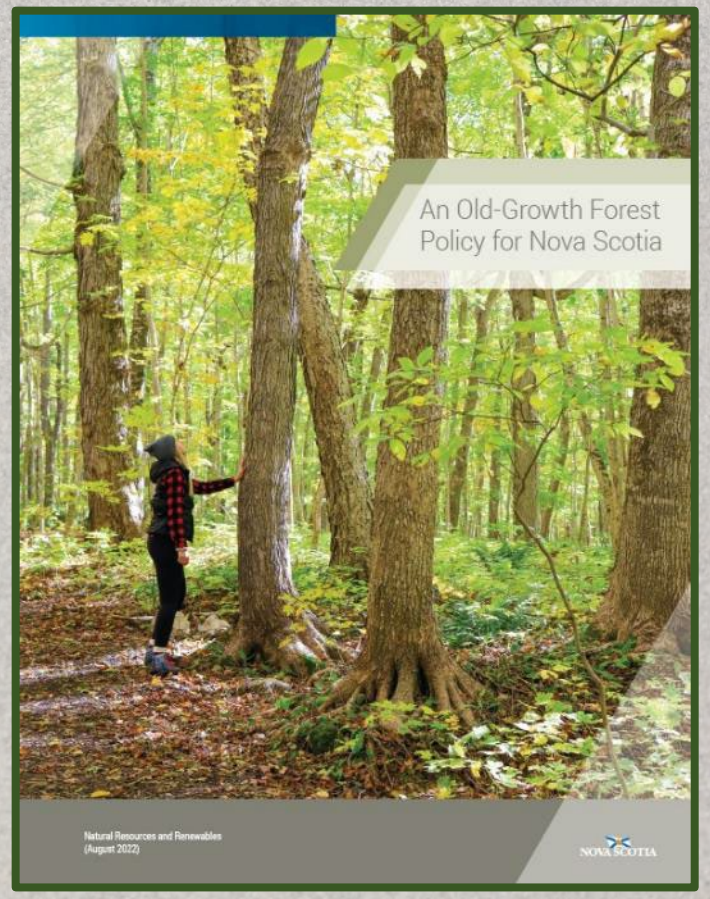

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