



Presentation: Climate Change and Environmental Stewardship Committee

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by **Dr. Caroline Lubbe-D'Arcy, Chair**
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Good morning, members of the Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Stewardship.

My name is Dr. Caroline Lubbe-D'Arcy, and I am chair of Stop Spraying NB (SSNB), a non-partisan group that was founded in 2015, and became an incorporated not-for-profit advocacy group in 2017, focused on stopping the spraying of Glyphosate and other herbicides on public land, which includes forest spraying and NB Power spraying in New Brunswick.

Stop Spraying NB has these three messages for you today:

1) SSNB represents 35,000 signatories and a very large Facebook discussion group that continues to gain new support. Awareness of this issue is growing all the time. This is an issue that New Brunswick citizens care about. They have legitimate concerns. The government of New Brunswick cannot pretend to represent the people, when this issue continues to meet inaction.

2) The government of New Brunswick has to exercise the precautionary principle and ban spraying of glyphosate and other similar acting herbicides on our public lands.

3) Spraying serves corporate interests, not the people. Public lands belong to the public to do public good, and not to advance private interests. It is clear from the refusal to adopt an auction system, raise stumpage rates or stop spraying, that the GNB prime interest is not the people of NB who we represent but private interests.



New Brunswickers witness first-hand what the current forest strategy is doing to our public forests. We are not witnessing sustainable forest management on public land. Instead our forests are being destroyed. We receive a large number of comments of concern from our large number of supporters via our Facebook group and at hunting and fishing shows. The public does not feel heard, and support for this movement grows every day. Throughout my presentation I will read out comments that our supporters have given us about the travesty on our public forest lands.

Kevin Shaw from Miramichi Headwaters Salmon Federation: *"I grew up in Juniper and have spent all my life in the woods. Winters were hard with little money so we lived off of land for decades just like most of the people from our area. Our family froze fiddleheads, pan trout, sea trout, salmon in the spring and summer along with partridge, deer and maybe a moose, if we were lucky, in the fall. Almost everyone harvested the abundance of raspberries and blueberries.*

I worked 35 years on the railroad and traveled the track and back roads between Chipman and Grand Falls, so I have seen first-hand the results of excessive clearcutting and spraying of glyphosate, or as we called it, brush kill. A fresh cut used to excite us deer hunters because we knew that in a couple of years it would be prime deer hunting since there was an abundance of browse. Hunters came from all over NB to hunt in the Juniper area. Outfitters did well and with lots of US sports coming over to fish salmon and hunt the white tail deer. Then came glyphosate spraying and that changed everything. The deer slowly disappeared, moving toward private land and along watershed buffers, trying to find wintering areas. The numbers dwindled. The local store used to register over 200 deer but now if they register 20, then that is a good year. I, along with many, stopped deer hunting since there was simply none to be had.

I joined the Miramichi Headwaters Salmon Federation when it started in the 80s in hopes to learn more about declining fish numbers and our diminishing water table. Industry told us over and over that things were ok with the fish and deer and that spraying was harmless. For years we believed them. In my mind industry and government have failed terribly in protecting wildlife and forest.

We have attended fish and wildlife sporting shows in Moncton and Sussex. 99 percent of the people feel the same as us and our presence was greatly appreciated. People are sick and tired of our forests being poisoned and there are lots of horror stories of people who have witnessed first-hand the destruction of spraying near their homes and their favourite hunting areas. "

The people of New Brunswick have overwhelmingly shown their opposition to herbicide spraying and their disapproval of subsidizing this practice on their public forest land. Based on our petition and our Facebook discussion group size through which we connect with New



Brunswickers who support our campaign, Stop Spraying NB is the largest organized group in Canada, despite being based in one of the smallest provinces.

Luc Albert: *"Food sources are gone after spraying. Wildlife dies off due to this. It is a massive loss of food, diversity, cover and habitat. I've gone hunting and there is no life after they sprayed. Sprayed plantations are not forests. I miss being able to see forest uncut for kms on end in a natural state. It makes me feel like we don't have control of our crown land. It is no longer our forest...it is at the mercy of an industry that will never have enough. Wildlife depends on natural regeneration for survival. The numbers of deer and moose are down. Grouse/hare habitat is getting rare due to spraying. The only place you see them is on small private land with natural regeneration."*

The Legislature should be the voice of the people, who have been very clear during the past three election cycles about where they stand. However, the Legislature has so far ignored the people. This is an issue that New Brunswickers care about, the **precautionary principle** should be followed which means that the legislature should address it by banning spraying of glyphosate and other similar herbicides on publicly owned forest land.

David Matchett: *"In my time they sprayed DDT to eliminate the spruce bud worm. 60 years later they still found it was present in the lands and lakes. The same will happen with glyphosate. Birds, animals, plants and soil will experience the effects of spraying for years and years to come. The government says it is not harmful. If you tell a lie long enough it tends to become "truth." The same can be said about "clear-cutting".*

The Legislature cannot ignore this issue and still pretend to be representatives of New Brunswickers. Spraying serves corporate interests, but not the people of New Brunswick.

Jeff Jonah: *"My family has had a cottage on the Kennebecasis River in the Portage Vale area since 2000. During this time I have come across many clear cuts on my ATV travels, some within a 1/2 mile from the river, some even closer to home and cottages where we have found the infamous tiny signs showing this area has been sprayed with the herbicide Glyphosate. The trout and salmon numbers have plummeted during these last 21 years. When we receive a heavy down pour, the river rises quickly with silt then drops just as suddenly. I rarely see Ruffed Grouse and song birds on the trails whether on the ATV or hiking the area."*

During the last two elections, the Stop Spraying NB issue has been a prominent election issue. In 2018 we saw promises from the smaller political parties to ban this practice, and in 2020 every political party except the PC party had promised to either ban or phase out forest herbicide spraying.



Gino Doucet: *"As an avid New Brunswick hunter and fishermen I have witnessed how glyphosate spraying has destroyed natural biodiverse forests into empty brown waste lands for years on end. Areas around our wonderful Mount Carleton remain vast wastelands along both sides of route 180. Not only is glyphosate spraying eliminating deer food plots, but I have witnessed decade old deer migration trails flattened and lost forever. When the blocks eventually grow back it will be a completely different monocultured fir tree landscape. No wonder our deer population is suffering far worse here than in all of our neighboring provinces/states. I really like what Minister Mike Holland is doing to move the hunting and fishing regulation advancements... but they will be short lived due to his inaction on the natural resources front."*

Our neighbours in Québec stopped forest herbicide spraying in 2001 because Québec listened to the public. Québec conducted three rounds of extensive public consultation between 1988 and 1997, while the province was developing its forest strategy for Québec forests, of which 90% are located on public land. At every round of consultation, the public stated clearly that herbicide spraying on public forests was a non-starter. The onus was never put on the public to provide proof that herbicide spraying is unsafe, which is how it should be. Instead, Québec listened to the people, and took the responsibility it has of exercising the precautionary principle seriously. Less than two weeks ago, Maine decided to also listen to the public, and voted for a ban on aerial spraying of glyphosate.

New Brunswickers see the harm glyphosate does to habitat. First, we are dealing with plantations that only hold softwood trees, which are not habitat needed by the diversity of wildlife and birds that need mixed forests. Add glyphosate to the mix, and the biodiversity of our forests are further compromised as previous presentations have stated.

Ralph Watson: *"I have noticed that the deer herd has dropped significantly as well as song birds, squirrel, the wild berries like blueberries, and blackberries, even the trout in the little Brooks are far less than they were. Many mushrooms disappear after the spray. The changes to the ecosystem even to the point that the land dries so much faster after a rain. The diversity is needed for many things. Rabbits used to be everywhere in my area, but I hardly see any after the land was sprayed. Out fishing yesterday, I noticed a scum on the water of this brook that I had never seen before. They sprayed this area about 3 years ago."*

You will hear a lot of scientific evidence from scientists this week, and from other advocacy groups that show the legitimate concerns associated with forest herbicide spraying, and I don't intend to repeat this during my presentation, but I will quickly touch on a few points.

Peer-reviewed and published research done in BC shows, that plants that do not get killed fully grow back looking sickly and deformed, and berry bushes and other plants that survive retain



glyphosate for up to a decade. More research recently emerged that reproductive organs of plants are seriously affected by glyphosate. (1) (2) (3)

Dr. Simard has researched plantations for decades, and discovered the symbiotic relationship that exists between commercial birch trees and softwood trees. She found that softwood trees are actually healthier if birch trees are present on plantations, through the sharing of nutrients such as carbon, nitrogen, phosphorous, water through mycorrhizal fungi. Mycorrhiza are a fundamental component to add to the health of a forest or plantation. Forestry practices that include herbicide spraying destroy all these connections and actually encourages disease in the forest industry's preferred softwood trees. (4)

Research at McGill university has identified a connection between glyphosate and blue-green algae, and that glyphosate affects algae biodiversity in waterways. (5) (6)

It is also interesting, that there is a tendency to only measure softwood trees on plantations to measure success, when it makes perfectly good sense according to some forest experts that commercially viable hardwood species could be included in an assessment of a plantation plot. (7)

Barbara Shannon: *"When they spray an area it completely kills ALL food sources for the animals. It kills the existing food sources and prevents any new growth. This forces the animals to move closer to human habitat which in turn causes "nuisance animals". They have no food in their natural habitat so they move into people's backyards. It forces them to turn to unnatural food sources. So they eat "human food" to survive.*

SSNB and our supporters want to see forest management without herbicides, but instead **managed by manual silviculture**. We know it can be done and we insist that GNB needs to stop considering what is convenient for the forestry companies. Our supporters do not want to subsidize herbicide spraying. On our public forestland we want to see forestry done sustainably both environmentally and economically, without the need of these crippling subsidies to the tax payer, which render our largest resource a money loser, as our past Auditor General, Kim McPherson concluded on several occasions now. MacPherson's 2015 determined that the province lost money on its Crown forest resource to the tune of \$7- to \$10-million between the audit period of 2009-2014. She named the silviculture program and the licensing payments the provincial government gives to industry for doing the silviculture work in Crown forests as the two main contributors to the annual forest deficit.(8)

In Québec, forestry has been done without herbicides since 2001. As I mentioned earlier, Québec developed their forest strategy, following extensive public consultation which is **ecosystem-based** and includes **careful logging around advanced growth** (CLAAG, or CPRS in French). (9) The forestry companies did not leave Québec, by the way, so it cannot be all that bad over there for business.



Carol Prime Egers: *"Don't get me wrong, I like looking out the window and seeing one or two deer passing through, but I see anywhere between 8 and 20 here every day. I put hay out to feed my horses in winter and the deer are chowing down on it, alongside them. It's not good for deer to eat a lot of hay. It's not easy for them to digest but if there's nothing else, they will eat it."*

The tone of invitations by the Committee to appear during hearings on glyphosate and other pesticide use in NB changed in 2021. In 2020, groups were simply invited to appear before the committee to be heard, but in 2021, the invitation included this stipulation: " Specifically, the Committee invites your evidence-based comments". Seventeen months ago, SSNB asked Minister Mike Holland's office for wildlife data on New Brunswick public forests. After repeated promises and back-and-forth, we unfortunately were provided with no data, thanks to Minister Mike Holland's Office's refusal to provide us with any. How can we make evidence-based comments to your Committee when the government refuses to give us data? The Department of Natural Resources has 4 full-time employees in the Habitat Section on staff, so surely there must be wildlife data in New Brunswick.

Fortunately, one of our supporters gave us the 2017 NB Habitat Supply Analysis Project Results that analyzed habitat thresholds for NB forest indicator species. Since this is a report from the New Brunswick Department of Natural Resources, we wonder why these documents were not shared with us.

In the GNB document **"Vertebrate Habitat Supply for New Brunswick" (2017)** we can see that between 2012 and 2022 there is an increase in the number of indicator species that are below threshold requirements for habitat. I will read a few quotes from this paper.

"Old-forest habitats, assessed at their largest minimum patch sizes, declined by 79% (1.28M ha to 272K ha) from 1987 to 2012, and are expected to decline by 15% (to 231K ha) from 2012 to 2037, with most of the change happening by 2022. The sharp decline from 1987 to 2012 was due to harvesting of old forest over the period at a rate which precluded its replacement, due in part to a relatively low abundance of mid-age forest at the outset."

"Young and mid-age forest habitats at their largest minimum patch sizes increased by 40% from 1987 to 2012, are expected to increase a further 21% by 2022"

"The single species that is below its threshold in 2012 is white-breasted nuthatch in OTHH (8%). In 2022, those below threshold are white-breasted nuthatch in OTHH

(14%), black-backed woodpecker in OSFH (27%) and American marten in OFH (20%)."

Just these few reports sound troubling. We need to remember that forest indicator species are the canary in the coalmine in forestry. Their decline indicates we are on the verge of losing significant biodiversity in our public forests.



There are other forest indicator species we know of that are likely in trouble. Back in Nov. 2014, government research by NBDNR wildlife biologists concluded, that "minimum habitat thresholds for NB forest 'indicator species' are predicted to become significantly below thresholds. This list includes (1) American marten, (2) fisher, (3) Northern flying squirrel, (4) Red-tailed hawk, (5) Barred owl, (6) Black-backed woodpecker, (7) Pileated woodpecker, (8) White-breasted nuthatch, and (9) Pine warbler." In 2015, all of these NBDNR wildlife biologists including their manager were transferred out of the wildlife section.

We also have wildlife data collected by two grade 8 students. On their own initiative, these students decided to do a wildlife survey for a class science project during the winters of 2019/20 and 2020/21, because they are very concerned about wildlife in New Brunswick. They counted animal tracks on three types of clear-cuts: clear-cuts with silviculture, naturally regenerating clear-cuts, and clear-cuts with glyphosate treatment, and found a reduction in animal tracks on clear-cuts treated with glyphosate. If students can do wildlife surveys, surely staff at the habitat Section at DNRE must be doing their own surveys. Why not release data to the public?

Jon Foget: *"The glyphosate spraying is destroying natural habitat, numbers of small animals are dwindling. I rarely see rabbits or grouse in the area on our travels throughout the Penobscis area!"*

The loss of biodiversity in the rural communities is highlighted by the catastrophic drop in the NB deer population. The spraying of glyphosate kills the trees that deer feed on and this loss of food has caused a dramatic drop in their numbers here in New Brunswick. Our deer population is now a quarter of what it was 30 years ago (New Brunswick's deer population has plummeted from 270,000 to 74,000 over the past 3 decades). Data comparing New Brunswick, Maine and Québec show that the deer harvest numbers in New Brunswick have decreased to 15% of 1985 LEVELS, whereas numbers are up 300% in Québec and have remained stable in Maine. And to add insult to injury the number of deer yards were cut by half in 2012, and again in 2014. So deer yards are actually 1/4 of what they were.

Heather Wood: *"I have spent most of my adult life living in or surrounded by dense forest. If I wasn't exploring the back roads, I was fishing the rivers or camping in the deep woods. I have watched what was once a very vibrant and healthy forest become a place that is having difficulty sustaining flora and fauna. Our hardwood ridges no longer draw in the leaf peeping tourists because our hardwood ridges no longer produce hardwoods. We are spraying them to death. In my younger days, students were hired to thin the power lines and railway beds, but now, they are sprayed. I have watched a healthy forest bed, complete with moss and lichens, creepy crawlies that provided food for the birds and critters that in turn, provided waste and/or food for other creatures of the land become a wasteland of nothing. Not even the lowly worm. Where I used to sit and listen to the chattering of*



squirrels, watch rabbits munch on the grass, listen to the caw of crows or the screech of a hawk, offer up nothing but dead silence. No humming from the bees or squeaks from mice, no chirping, no hooting, no squawking, nothing but the wind. The sign of a healthy garden is the presence of garter snakes. I have not had a garter snake nor seen one, in the last 8 years. That says all I need to know about the poisoning of our land."

Eugene LaPointe: *" I live on a property of about 20 acres. I am surrounded by about 1000 acres of private land on opposite sides of rural roadways. There are two pairs of Pileated Woodpeckers that live within this private land of 1000 acres. It consists of second growth, Old Growth, especially Eastern White Pine, Poplar, Birch, and Maple. With some large white and black spruce. Along with White Cedar, some Black Ash and fir. As I'm sure you are aware, Pileated Woodpeckers need dead stems to breed and thrive, and plenty of them. They need it for shelter, nesting, and above all, for their food supply. Without hundreds of dead stems in an area, there can be no woodpeckers; not counting all those other birds, flying squirrels, red squirrels, martin, etc. that depend on the same. It is impossible for any Pileated Woodpecker, to live in any plantation environments. Our Province is becoming a Zoo, with trapped species, in parcels of forest; In a few short decades, so much wildlife will be endangered that only chance sightings will be possible; travelling hundreds of kilometers to make contact. Or simply in a media format"*

The comments I have read out throughout my presentation are but a few of more than I can count. They clearly reflect the frustration so many New Brunswickers feel about the state of forestry in New Brunswick.

We want to be heard, we want public consultation and full transparency, and we don't want to subsidize something that does not benefit us.

In closing I will leave you with one last comment from a supporter and long-standing opponent of forest herbicide spraying, Gerry Leblanc, a silviculture worker, who is also the artist who designed our signs.

Gerry Leblanc: *I think we have to bring forward some kind of solution. Greed, jobs, nobody listens. 83 % of our forest have been cut and no signs of slowdown. My catch phrase is " Humans can harvest trees and leave a healthy forest still ". Here in Rogersville , there are two machines doing SEMI COMMERCIAL THINNING. This provides more jobs. In twenty years, they may harvest more. It is beautiful work and so neat. We should support these people and make it trendy. Of course, there are patches that need clearing, and yes replant them, but without spraying. There are several machines of this kind in Kent County. There is one machine that reaches up to sixty feet, and one can sit as co-pilot behind the operator. Let's make these folks famous."*



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