

Forestry Sector Study
Executive Summary Report

2.0 Executive Summary

Introduction

In 1998 the Forestry Training Sub-Committee of the Northern Labour Market Committee decided to access the funding provided through Saskatchewan Post Secondary Education and Skills Training for a Sector Partnership project. A Steering Committee was established which was made up of the original members of the Forestry Training Sub-Committee, plus additional members representing industry, training providers, funding agencies and related organizations were added.

The mandate of the Forestry Sector Partnership was to identify the human resource and training needs of the forestry industry. The outcomes from the research would be used to develop relevant training programs and approaches to best meet the needs of the industry. The following outlines the findings obtained through extensive consultation and discussions with all relevant stakeholders

Phase One - Summary

The research project was conducted in two phases. The first phase was done during the fall of 1998 and the winter of 1999. The findings from Phase One are on the industry as it existed prior to the April 1999 announcement by the Provincial Government on the planned expansion. The research was undertaken to obtain first hand information regarding the human resource issues and to obtain an understanding of the forestry industry training needs. The following outlines the methodology and findings of Phase One.

Literature Review

The secondary information indicates that an important part of any successful industry is its experienced, trained workforce. The forestry industry in Saskatchewan has succeeded in competing in the international marketplace by striving to meet changing technology and environmental demands. The continued success of this forestry industry is dependent on the workforce in which it draws from, and it's ability to meet the industry's needs. In order to meet these needs, training and human resource issues must be identified and addressed.

Human Resource and Training Needs Assessment Study

Company Information

Main business area: Survey respondents were asked to identify their main area of business.

Companies interviewed work in the following areas:

- forest harvesting,
- wood processing industries,
- sawmill operation,
- hauling logs,
- graveling and sanding logging roads,
- lumber manufacture,
- training people in road construction,
- trucking,
- sawyer (journeyman),
- silviculture.

Length of time in business: The results indicate that the average company working in the Saskatchewan forestry sector has been operation for an average of 16.7 years. The number of years each company has been operating range from 1948 to 1998. Half of the businesses were established before 1982, while the other half were established after 1982.

Equity groups: The results of the survey research indicate the employment of Aboriginal people is above provincial average, as indicated by the 1991 census. Participation by employees with disabilities and visible minorities is below the provincial average.

Employment Projections: The initial survey results indicate that the three largest occupations in terms of number of employees were:

- trades persons (147)
- labourers (126)
- truck drivers (116)

The occupations predicted to experience the most growth in the next five years included:

- forestry technicians /technologists /professionals
- harvesting equipment operators
- mill equipment operators.

Employee Profile: In terms of age of employees, the forestry industry employs younger people compared to the provincial averages in terms of the employed labour. Almost two-thirds of the workforce is between the ages of 15-34.

In general, industry employees are below the provincial average level of formal education. 14% of employees have completed less than a Grade 9 education, compared to the provincial average of 9%.

Employees of Aboriginal descent are highly represented in this industry. 36.5% of the workforce are Aboriginal, compared to the provincial rate of 4.4%.

Persons with disabilities and visible minorities may be underrepresented compared to provincial labour force statistics. 3.0% of the industry's workers are disabled, this can be compared to the provincial rate of 4.7%, while 1% of the industry's workforce consists of visible minorities, compared to the provincial average of 2.5%.

Recruitment and Retention

Difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified employees: The main difficulties companies have in recruiting and retaining qualified employees is lack of available experienced personnel, poor climate conditions, and the work tends to be limited to seasonal employment.

Employee retention is the most difficult for truck drivers, millwrights, and labourers.

Of the companies surveyed 58% experienced a zero turnover rate in the last year. Of those companies who did experience turnover, 2.9% voluntarily left their jobs last year, 0.5% were terminated, and 1.1% were laid off. The overall turnover rate was 4.5%.

Skill Requirements and Training

In-house Training: Of those surveyed, 71% provide in-house training to their employees.

Present Training Needs: The most commonly mentioned skill shortages identified were: conventional harvesting equipment operators, administrators, and mechanical harvesting equipment operators.

Future Training Needs: The most common occupation that will require future training is administrators. Other occupations include mechanical harvesting equipment operators, mill equipment operators, labourers, and forestry managers (technicians, technologists, and professional foresters).

Barriers to Training: Survey results indicate common barriers to training are the lack of money, lack of facilities and equipment necessary to provide training, the lack of time to provide adequate on-the-job training, and the cost of training a new employee due to direct training costs and reduced production.

Training Options – Awareness and Assessment

Human Resource Issues: Issues include government control and politics, lack of timber to cut, and the issues surrounding large and small business. Solutions revolve around training including courses closer to home and by providing comprehensive safety training to the industry's workers.

Training Issues: Companies indicated that the lack of funding to provide training, safety issues, and lack of an organized training system are key issues they face. Other issues include employee's lack of motivation and providing adequate on-the-job training. Solutions involve holding regular and more frequent safety meetings, hosting courses in the remote communities where the employees work and live, and training of personnel as on the job trainers.

Other Issues: Other training issues, not specific to individual forestry occupations include cultural sensitivity, literacy and life skills training.

Industry Validation

Focus groups were conducted with companies involved in the forestry industry in Saskatchewan to validate the results of the telephone survey as well as to explore and report the viewpoints of these individuals regarding training needs within the industry. This method allows direct input by participants and the opportunity to recognize potential gaps relating to training issues.

The forestry industry is currently facing many changes. Training issues and need are not viewed as a pressing problem by the focus group participants. The issue for many was the lack of a sustainable supply of wood. They all state that having opportunity to access more wood would lead to stability for their businesses. Once the allocation issue is resolved, operators will be more inclined to focus on the need for more formalized training. Currently all research indicated that training is done on an as needed basis, for a specific task and is conducted in an informal manner. Most operators do not view on the job instruction as 'training'. It also appears that participating companies have a reasonably stable workforce and an established reliable pool of people to draw upon when new employees are needed.

Training Database

Relevant training programs for the Saskatchewan forestry industries have been compiled into a database. The database outlines training offered across Canada and is broken down by provider, course description, certificate or degree earned and the length of the program.

Forestry Sector Partnership

The Forestry Sector Partnership Steering Committee will continue the partnership and implement the recommendations that were made as a result of the research conducted in Phase One of the project. The Steering Committee, through the development of a second phase of the partnership, will conduct a needs assessment and develop strategies that will address issues that have recently come to the forefront as a result of the April 1999 announcement regarding the expansion of the forestry industry in Saskatchewan.

Phase Two - Industry Summary

Following the initial study, a further study was undertaken because in April 1999 the provincial government announced a major expansion within the forestry industry in the province of Saskatchewan. The focus of the announcement was the reallocation of wood supply and the creation of 10,000 direct and indirect jobs over the next decade. This expansion is based on a partnership model, which includes industry, Aboriginal people, northern communities, and government. The expansion will double the present size of the forest industry and involve private sector investment of over 850 million dollars. The developments will primarily impact central and northern Saskatchewan communities. Soon after the announcement it became apparent that to effectively deal with the expansion industry, the provincial Government would need to identify employment and training needs as soon as possible. It was decided that the training issues could be identified and dealt with through the Sector Partnership process.

The developments are based on conditional allocation of surplus wood from the existing Weyerhaeuser forest management area (FMLA). Weyerhaeuser plans to more than double production of softwood lumber at its Big River Sawmill and are looking to expand their partnership with the Woodland Cree resources in the construction and operation the new Wapawekka sawmill in the Prince Albert area. The other projects and developments include:

- A partnership between Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and Ainsworth Lumber Ltd., of British Columbia to build new sawmills in Creighton and Deschambault Lake and a finger jointer plant in Prince Albert.
- A partnership between Lac La Ronge Indian Band and Zelensky Brothers to build a new sawmill in La Ronge.
- A partnership between James Smith Cree Nation and Suntec Forest Products to build a sawmill and a value-added remanufacturing facility at Zenon Park.
- Northwest Community Wood Products, a partnership between five Northwest Metis Communities - Green Lake; Beauval; Ile a la Crosse; Patuanak and Pinehouse, will build a new sawmill at Beauval and a finishing plant at Green Lake.
- A Partnership between Green Lake Metis Wood Products and Stillwater Forest Products of Montana to construct a finger jointer plant and replace the existing sawmill in Green Lake.
- Ainsworth Lumber Ltd. and NorSask Forest Products will pursue the development of an Oriented Strand Board (OSB) mill In Meadow Lake.
- L & M Wood Products at Glaslyn is expanding it's operation to include a new state of the art wood treatment plant.
- Saskfor MacMillan construction of a new Oriented Strand Board (OSB) mill in Hudson Bay.

- The doubling of production at the Big River saw mill by Weyerhaeuser, making it one of the largest mills in Canada.
- In Partnership with the Woodland Cree (Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Lac La Ronge Indian Band) Weyerhaeuser is constructing the Wapawekka saw mill near Prince Albert.
- Weyerhaeuser is undertaking a \$315 million environmental upgrade of the Prince Albert pulp and paper mill.

Another significant event which took place was the announcement of the Forest Resource Management Act. The Act was approved in 1996 but was deferred until a set of supporting regulations could be developed. These regulations came into effect April 1 of 1999.

The act provides new and important guidelines regarding the allocation of wood volumes. These include increased northern and Aboriginal participation in the development and management of the forestry sector, sustainable forest management and better use of wood supply as well as a strengthened proponent responsibility for forest use planning and environmental previews.

Phase Two of the sector process began in June of 1999 and was completed by Oct.1, 1999. The study had four major objectives:

1. To determine in greater detail the extent and size of each project that was announced.
2. To identify the type and number of jobs that will be needed for each project.
3. To identify the human resource and training needs that will be needed to prepare people to work in these jobs.
4. To recommend an action plan identifying how the training and other human resource issues should be addressed.

The chart on the following pages offers a broad breakdown of the industry, and includes a summary of job types or titles involved in each area or portion of the industry. It also includes an estimate, using the information obtained throughout the interview process, of the jobs that will be created over the next 3-5 years. It should be noted that the majority of the projects have not completed their expansion plans. Given the fact most were in the planning stages, the numbers regarding job creation will change. The numbers included in this report should be used as an indicator of the training needs required not a final result. The original projections indicated there would be an increase of 3322 jobs directly related to the expansion.

The projects will create employment opportunities in four broad occupational streams:

Skilled Vocational

- 30-35% of new jobs will be in Sawmills, Fingerjointer plants and OSB mills.
- 35-40% of new jobs will be associated with Harvesting, Hauling and reforestation

Technical and Professional

- 10-15% of new jobs will be associated with Forest Management activities.

Trades

- 5% of new jobs will be in Apprenticeship Trades.

Administration

- 10% of new jobs will be in Management and Administration

A further 6500 indirect jobs will be created during the development (construction) and operational staged of these projects over the next 5 years. The following is the breakdown of where the direct employment demands will be created.

Employment by Activity and Occupational Category

Category	Sub- category	Job Titles
Mill Total of 1000 jobs over 3-5 years	Mill Increase of Approx. 1000 (average of 21 people per shift at 2 shifts per mill (does not include trades))	Planermill/Fingerjoining Planerman, Tilt Hoist, Lumber Grader, Stacker/Strapper, Wrapper, Forklift operator, Planer Feeder, Strip Piler, Forklift Outfeed, Grinderman, Car loader, Clean-up, Glue Mixer, Crowder Operator, Chopsaw operator, Finger Joint Grader, Carpenter, Skippers Sawmill Foreman, Log cutoff, End dogger, Canter, Log Transfer, Board Edger, Unscrambler, Strip machine, Sorter, Lumber Stacker, Loader, Spareman, Clean-up, Buckerman, Picker truck operator, Yard Man, Log infeed operator, Debarker, Headrig operator, Scrag operator, Gang Edger operator, Resaw operator, Graders, Green Chain Operators, Mill Forklift Operator, Rolling Stock shop operator, chipper. Skills required for employment willingness to work Industrial experience such as farm background, construction and/or sawmill experience Grade 12 or GED is required by some employers: others have not establishes a minimum grade requirement.
	Harvesting and Hauling Total of 933 jobs over 3-5 years	Hauling Increase by approx. 504 drivers Increase by approx. 429

Category	Sub- category	Job Titles
Professional and Technical areas 250 for the first 5 years then approximately 500 over a 10 year period.	Foresters Technicians	Forest Management Field Assistant, Field surveyors, Forest Management Planner, Forest Protection Officer, Regional Protection Officer, Forest Engineer, Forestry Technician, GIS technologist, Foresters, Conservation Officers, Fire Suppression Program Entrance Requirements Grade 12 and course specific prerequisites i.e. English, math, Score 12.0 in reading comprehension, mathematics and written expression as measured by the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) Level 16
Trades Need for approximately 96 in total	Millwrights	Maintenance Trades Sawfiler, Journeyman Millwright, Journeyman Electrician, Heavy Duty Mechanics Apprenticeship Entrance Requirements Heavy Duty mechanic and Millwright require Grade 10 and electricians require Grade 11. All programs have some specific prerequisites that are required for participation in the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certificate Program. The Apprenticeship commission has the ability to exempt some pre-requisites if entrance requirements can be met through Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR).
	Electricians	
	Sawfilers	
	Heavy Duty Mechanics	
Reforestation/ Silviculture Total of 200 new seasonal and full time jobs	Technicians/ Labourers	Reforestation and Silviculture Planting, site preparation, scarification, and stand tending. Skills required for employment Physical fitness, dependability, nursery experience
Management Increase of min. 60 positions	Supervisors	Supervisory Forman for mill operation, Harvesting (supervisor/mechanic)hauling, reforestation and forestry technicians Skills required for employment Interpersonal, practices knowledge of the job, supervisory experience
	Management	Management and Administration Accounting, Human Resource and Senior Managers Skills required for employment Post Secondary Education and related experience

Human Resource Needs and Training Approaches

The study revealed many interesting aspects of the jobs that are about to be filled at the various operations. To be as concise as possible, the jobs examined were broken down by where the work in going to be undertaken.

Mill Operator

- The preferred and most effective method for training the mill operators is on-the-job. This is because of differences in mill design, equipment used and the fact that the training has to coincide with the construction and start-up.
- Some of the companies interviewed require a grade twelve or GED while others are currently asking for Grade ten.
- Each mill will be developing their own training program and delivering it using their own employees. Very little training will be acquired from outside, with the exception of some loader and forklift operator training.
- The training will be workbased and will be for both new hires as well as for retraining of existing staff. There will be a demand on Job Start Future Skills Workbased training funding along with the company's contribution or share. It should be noted that it was difficult to ascertain exact numbers because many if the operators have not officially finalized their mill design and their wood volume.

Forest Equipment Operators and Truck Drivers

- The basic criteria an employer presently uses for hiring is
 - Willing to work;
 - Can handle living away from home in a camp;
 - Possesses some industrial experience and skills; and
 - Understands and appreciated the need for proper handling of equipment.
- Employers require truck drivers to have a Class 1A license and two years experience preferably with some of that being log hauling.
- Presently there does not exist any formal technical skill training for forest equipment operators specific to mechanical harvesting operators.
- There are a number of training programs and training providers in the conventional logging, truck driver and heavy equipment operation, i.e., road building/loader operator.
- The education level of a new hire is not a consideration.
- There is a need to develop a forestry equipment operator training program that could be offered through a training institution, but it must include an actual on-the-job training component.

- Training needs to be industrially based and could be offered regionally in those areas where activity is taking place. The classroom portion or theoretical component should include topics such as:
 - Safety;
 - First Aid/CPR;
 - OH&S regulation;
 - Equipment familiarization;
 - Preventative Maintenance; and
 - Simulator training.

Trades

- There are not enough skilled trades people available.
- There has always been difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified people in rural and remote locations.
- The difficulty is also with the availability to recruit and train the local people for those trade jobs when there are not skilled tradespeople already working at the site.
- The trades that are key to the operation, whether it is a mill or a contractor are:
 - Saw filer
 - Heavy Duty Mechanic
 - Truck mechanic
 - Industrial Mechanic/Millwright; and
 - Electrician.
- There are numerous instances where the present employees working in those occupations, with the exception of electrician, are neither journeypeople nor apprentices
- There is a need to work with the various mills and contractors who employ the trades people to develop a training approach which gives access to local people wishing to become trades people and at the same time uses the apprenticeship approach. There will be a need to customize this approach so there can be greater access to apprenticeship.

Tree Planting and Stand Tending

- There has been an expansion to the greenhouse and tree nursery business to accommodate the demand for seedlings to plant.
- Contractors who provide the tree planting and stand tending services provide a three day introductory course and then on the job training as a member of a crew.
- It is difficult to assess the total number of new hires required but the employers are confident they will be able to meet their obligations. There is potential for these employees to access work-based training funds to assist them in the skill development of their employees.

Technical and Professional Areas

- There is a need to move forward with planning and implementation of a quality Forest Management and Protection program.
- This program is necessary to fulfill the needs of not only the Fire Management and Forest Protection Branch and the Forest Ecosystems Branch of Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management, also those of industry.
- The present changes to the new Forestry Act and Regulations provide the opportunity not only to change the role of Resource officers but also creating employment for northern residents, particularly Aboriginal people as Forest Management personal for the FMA/TSL holders.
- SIAST has begun consultations with the stakeholder groups of to develop a diploma level technical training program, which could eventually be another stream in the existing IRM program. There will also be a need by research and service industry people to have access to these positions.
- Following the creation of the diploma program, discussions will need to begin very quickly to have a degree program to address the needs of the employers, government departments, and those who graduated from the technical program. Presently those residents in Saskatchewan who wish to obtain a forestry related degree have to travel outside the province making it difficult to access, particularly if one lives in northern Saskatchewan.

Gap Analysis

The research revealed a number of gaps. They are as follows:

1. There is a need to take a more innovative and aggressive approach toward apprenticeship trades training in the areas of heavy duty mechanic, industrial mechanic/.millwright, sawfiler and electrician.
2. Forestry equipment operator training needs to develop which has the support and commitment of industry, contractors, training providers and funding agencies.
3. Continue to pursue the development of a diploma program for forest management personnel that could eventually lead to accessing a degree level program through some form of partnership agreement with government, industry and educational institutions.
4. There is a significant opportunity to meet the new challenges of adaptive resource management through formal and informal training including short courses, on the job training, upgrading, summer courses and distance delivery.
5. Additional training gaps will emerge as more FMA holders come into operation which could mean the need for environment audit training and the expansion of the concept of sustainable and or certified forestry.

Recommendations

The recommendations prepared and presented are the result of the major findings of the research that has been undertaken to date and are the consensus of the Forestry Sector Partnership Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee recognizes the need for ongoing human resource planning is crucial to address the rapid growth in the forestry industry. For the forestry industry to expand successfully growth areas in the industry must be addressed to ensure there is an adequate skilled workforce available to fill these jobs. The jobs include vocational, technical, professional and management. The recommendations developed will provide the backing to this need.

Recommendation: Vocational Preparedness Training

We recommend that vocational preparedness training courses be developed and delivered by SIAST, SIIT, DTI and the regional colleges or other training providers which would incorporate such topics as basic employability skills, forest ecology, environmental awareness, WHIMS, CPR and First Aid, Occupational Health and Safety, etc.

- There is a need to develop a pre-employment program, which can be made available to those contractors who are expanding their workforce. The program will be intended for preparing individuals to handle working in the bush in entry level positions and would include life skills, employability skills, and safety awareness.
- The Steering Committee supports the need to continue the delivery of Conventional Logging Certificate program offered by the Saskatchewan Forest Industry Safety Association Inc. This is a recognized and approved approach where experienced workers are examined and provided with a certificate that is valid for five years.

Recommendation: Mechanical Harvest Operator Training

We recommend that industry and training providers work together to develop a strategy to develop a forestry mechanical harvesting equipment operator training program.

- The business enterprises along with contractors, particularly those already operating, need to be consulted in the design, development and delivery of forest equipment (mechanical harvesting) operator training.
- The training program must be reflective of the individual needs of the employers and yet generic enough to prepare a person to work for any number of employers

Recommendation: Development of industry specific short courses

We recommend that a series of short courses (2-3 days) need to be developed and implemented to address the immediate needs of industry for upgrade training.

- Programs such as supervisory and management skills training are required by the sector as a whole, along with interpersonal skills training, safety training as well as specific upgrade in areas such as hydraulics, computers, and electronics.
- To maintain professional certification, technical and professional employees need to have access to ongoing training. These required short courses should be developed as a part of the industry specific short courses mentioned above.

Recommendation: Apprenticeship Training

We recommend that the apprenticeship training program for Heavy Duty Mechanics, Industrial Mechanics (Millwright), Sawfiler, and Electricians be examined to determine how best to implement training and certification for the forestry industry.

- Innovative delivery of the programs should be initiated to deal with the problems of location and coordination of training programs with contracts.
- An examination of any of the new and those existing occupations needs to be undertaken to determine whether they could become a designated trade.

Recommendation: Training Matrix

There is a need for developing a different approach to the accreditation of training.

- A combination of workbased training and institutional based training would address the needs of industry and training providers. The Meadow Lake Consortium (Mistik Management and its contractors, SIAST Woodland Campus – Meadow Lake Centre, Northwest Regional College, Meadow Lake Tribal Council and Human Resources Development Canada – Meadow Lake Region) have begun to develop a Training and Skill Certification Model which would see training and skill development occur on a progressive basis from the Entry Level to Supervisory/Trainer Level. This model allows for level I or introductory training to take place with the training provider and would cover all of the prerequisites and the introductory level classes. Level 2 and 3 would take place at the work site and would allow the employee to learn first hand on the equipment that they will be expected to work on. Level 4 encompasses supervisory training.

Recommendation: Technical and Professional Training

We recommend the need for SIAST in conjunction with the province's universities to develop a diploma level forest technician program, which can ultimately lead to a Saskatchewan based degree and or diploma program.

- There is a need for forestry-specific technical and professional training to be provided within the province. This would eliminate the problem of Saskatchewan workers having to travel to Alberta and B.C for training. SIAST needs to enter discussions with Saskatchewan's universities regarding the development of a university credit transfer agreement between their newly formed diploma program and a degree program.
- To avoid duplication and reduce cost, a brokerage arrangement between the universities in Saskatchewan and outside the province need to be undertaken.
- SIAST needs to continue the work they have begun with SERM to finalize the development and delivery of the first component, which is the diploma level program. The objective needs to allow off campus delivery and access for existing IRM graduates to return to complete this program. The consultation must also include industry representatives because a large portion of these jobs will be with them.

Recommendation: On the Job Training

We recommend that Industry should focus on developing and delivering in-house training programs. Training programs that can be delivered on-site addresses the issue of training accessibility. Encouraging internal training would address the need for trainers with industry experience and using up to date equipment as companies would be offering training using their own employees on their own shop floor.

- Companies should implement Human Resource Development Plans with detailed training plans identifying the job and the training requirements for the specific train-the-trainer courses. Course information should be made available to companies requiring these skills.
- Initiate discussions with vendors and/or equipment dealers as well as contractors to arrange an appropriate method to train those operators needed to handle the harvesting operation.
- Training providers such as SIAST, DTI, SIIT, and regional colleges need to continue working with industry regarding an appropriate assessment process.

Recommendation: Train the Trainer Courses

We recommend that training providers and industry collaborate on the development and delivery of a train the trainer program.

Recommendation: Sustained Funding for Training and Program Development

We recommend that additional funding be made available on a sustained basis to training providers specifically in the areas of apprenticeship, technology and mechanical harvesting. Available funding will ensure the training requirements of the forestry industry are met.

- A long term multiparty funding agreement should be incorporated and implemented to address the training needs of the forestry sector.
- Some Canadian colleges operate or lease/rent their own conventional and/or mechanical harvesting equipment line. In order to train they need access to wood. A mutually beneficial agreement could be struck between the training provider and industry. Contractors could give training providers access to wood in return for training of an equal value.
- The industry and training providers should investigate forming partnerships with the vendors of forestry equipment. This would be mutually beneficial to both sides; equipment suppliers would have the opportunity to demo, sell and train on their specific piece of equipment; industry and training providers would have access to equipment and training on a wider base of equipment. This would be beneficial for new and existing employees.
- The question of simulator training has been raised by training providers as a viable means of training new employees without risking damage to the equipment. Training providers should investigate the possibility of utilizing a tool such as this.

Recommendation: Safety Training

Research has shown that there is an inconsistent approach to providing safety training within the forestry industry. We recommend that these issues be addressed by developing a safety program that would be accessible to the industry.

- Industry, contractors and training providers should work with the Saskatchewan Forest Industries Safety Association Inc. to provide consistent safety-training programs that would be regularly available on-site to the company.

Recommendation: Promoting Career Opportunities

To ensure that there is an adequate labour market supply for the industry, We recommend the need for a more proactive program of promoting the employment and career opportunities available to Youth and Aboriginal peoples. This could be accomplished through:

- Information and displays at high school career fairs and presentations to classes along with informing high school guidance councilors and industrial arts teachers about the industry.
- Exploring job opportunities with First Nations Bands and Métis Regional Administration.
- Incorporate the services of agencies such as First Nations Bands and Métis Employment Agencies as well as Keewatin Career Development Corporation (KCDC) who have the mandate to find employment for those First Nation Band and community members.

Recommendation: Expand Recruitment Options

We recommend that the forestry industry to more actively promote careers within their industry.

- More interactions between industry and schools should be undertaken to attract young people to the industry.
- The K-12 system needs to place more emphasis on the advantages of skill and trades training. The predominant thought today is to direct students towards a university education when there are many other viable options available.
- Relevant balanced information on the role of the forestry industry in Saskatchewan and society needs to be developed and be made readily available.

Recommendation: Program Information Accessibility

We recommend that Industry should work with training providers and government to ensure information about training programs and funding is easily accessible to companies. The Forestry Training Sub-Committee serves a vital role in brokering information to members about training programs and funding. A communication strategy could include:

- Information on training programs and funding should be readily accessible to all industry members in the form of centralized or regional centres, such as the Canada Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services Centre as well as at SIAST, SIIT, DTI and regional colleges. A resource person should be made available to answer any questions that may surround training or funding applications.
- A quarterly newsletter could be developed that could be sent to industry members outlining new programs and changes to existing programs.
- Alternate methods to ensure that industry is kept up to date should be explored. Examples could be radio or television announcements or newspaper articles.

Recommendation: Alternate Assessment Methods

We recommend that alternate methods of assessing a persons skills or knowledge be explored or considered.

- Quite often individuals that come to the jobs do not use English as a first language.
- Typical assessment is done with the paper and pencil approach that is very often appropriate if the training is done in remote areas such as at the work site in the bush.
- For some jobs, especially the low technical and manual labour type jobs, oral testing or validation is often the best approach.

Recommendation: Industry Literacy and Education Levels

We recognize the concern raised regarding the lack of literacy skills and education levels of the employees in companies and recommend the need to further explore these issues with all the stakeholders to arrive at a solution.

- The technology in the industry today requires higher education levels and employers with strong workplace literacy skills in order to remain competitive.
- Research what is being done in other industries and companies who have already identified this as a problem and share this with the Forestry training Sub-Committee.

Recommendation: Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR)

Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR) is an effective and acceptable approach to recognizing and certifying individuals who have worked in an occupation for a long time or have attended other training programs elsewhere. We recommend the implementation of appropriate PLAR approaches for certification by:

- Initiating discussions with SIAST, the universities and the Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Branch to set out the mechanisms for PLAR.
- The Apprenticeship Commission currently has the ability to exempt some entrance requirements through PLAR.
- Working with employers and employees to identify those jobs or occupations that can best be assessed by those processes that are in place.
- Promoting the merits and benefits of giving proper certification and recognition to employers using PLAR.

Recommendation: Cultural Sensitivity Training

We recommend that discussions with Aboriginal organizations and training providers should be undertaken to address this issue in the industry. As the workforce changes in terms of demographics there will be a need for this in the future. Awareness of cultural diversity issues must be raised with employers even if there are no obvious problems in the company.

- Information about training courses or seminars on cultural diversity should be made available to industry.
- Industry and training providers must ensure that their training programs fit industry and social needs.

Recommendation: Research Results

We recommend that the results of the training and human resource needs assessment and the recommendations of the Forestry Sector Partnership Studies should be publicized.

- The Forestry Training Sub-Committee will provide an executive summary to members through avenues such as a newsletter.
- Presentations should be made to the Northern Labour Market Committee, Metis Regional Administration, First Nations Bands and Post Secondary Education and Skills Training.
- Issue a news release announcing the completion of this study.

Recommendation: Role of the Forestry Training Sub-Committee

We recommend the initiatives identified by the Forestry Sector Partnership be continued by the Forestry Training Sub-Committee of the Northern Labour Market Committee

- The stakeholders must continue to work together to identify and address human resource and training issue of a rapidly expanding industry, which includes harvesting, silviculture, milling, value-added processing and the manufacturing sectors.
- The membership of the Forestry Training Sub-Committee needs to be expanded to include representatives from new and proposed value-added operations.
- There needs to be proper industry representation so there is a balance with non-industry representation.
- An industry co-chair is required to balance the committee's perspective.
- The focus of the work will ensure it addresses regional needs, involves all stakeholders, particularly industry, funding agencies and training providers.

Next Steps

1. The composition of the Forestry Training Sub-Committee should be addressed to insure that it is representative of all parties concerned with issues and changes taking place in Saskatchewan's forestry industry. This would include representation from industry, government, training providers, First Nation and Metis groups and funding agencies;
2. Development and implementation of the multi-party training agreement for the forestry industry;
3. Continuation of the work commenced between SIAST and SERM on the development and delivery of the Forestry Technician program. There needs to be assurances made that SERM and SIAST as well as industry members such as Weyerhaeuser and Peter Ballantyne all have their needs met through out the program development process;
4. Maintain the sustainability of the work through the Forestry Training Sub-Committee; and
5. Develop a communication process for the release of the report.

