

Two Successful Teachers' Tours at the Canadian Ecology Centre

By John Pineau



Over 75 teachers participated in two tours at the Canadian Ecology Centre during the past few weeks. An English Teachers' Tour took place from August 8th to 11th, while a French Tour ran from August 14th to 17th. The tours represent the sixth in English for the Centre, and the third French Tour. Their purpose is to give participating teachers a balanced overview of the forest industry and forest management through mill tours, forest operations site visits, hands-on activities, and the opportunity to

meet a wide variety of people who work in forestry and forest management, including government, industry and contractors.

“Both tours were very successful and very well received by the teachers,” said Martine Noël, Tour Coordinator with the Canadian Ecology Centre. “Our staff did a great job in delivering both and the teachers had a lot of fun while learning. It is a real advantage that we can provide forestry and environmental education opportunities equally well in English or French. The teachers really enjoyed visiting the Mattawa area too.”

Participating teachers came from Ontario, Québec, and New Brunswick. They visited Tembec mills in Temiscaming and Mattawa, and also had an opportunity to plant trees, practice forest fire fighting, learn about ecology and ecosystems, visit several forestry operations and research sites, and meet and talk with government and industry foresters, biologists and technicians. Each teacher also received a 15-minute bird's eye view of the forest landscape by helicopter.



Cash funding, staff time and assistance for the two Teachers' Tours were provided by many partners including the Canadian Lumbermen's Association, Sir Sandford Fleming College, the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, Tembec Inc., the Algonquin Forestry

Authority, Quality Hardwoods in Powassan and many others. Close to \$75,000 were raised for the two tours, from over 30 individual forestry sector sponsors, organizations and companies. Volunteer time and in-kind contributions for the tours are estimated at close to \$60,000 in value. The tours are free for all participating teachers.

“The Canadian Ecology Centre will continue to host two annual Teachers’ Tours every August,” says Martine. “We have already started planning for next year, and we expect to continue to get a large number of applicants given the success of the seven tours that we have completed. Almost four hundred teachers have now experienced the Teachers’ Tour and the Mattawa area and the Nipissing Forest since 2001! The feedback we get every year from the teachers consistently stresses the importance of spreading the word about forestry and how it has completely changed their perspective on so many issues.”