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# news release

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## **CANADA AND RUSSIA TO ESTABLISH MODEL FOREST PROJECT**

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet and Natural Resources Minister Anne McLellan today announced that Russia and Canada will work together to establish a model forest in Russia. Russia is the second partner in the International Model Forests Program.

Gaining interest worldwide, Canada's International Model Forests Program -- a \$10-million initiative -- is based on the success of the Canadian model forest network. Its purpose is to promote among developed and developing countries the sharing of concepts and technology related to the implementation of sustainable forest management and pave the way for additional partnerships.

"Canada welcomes the opportunity to have Russia as its partner in the International Model Forests Program. Co-operation between countries on difficult sustainable development issues is the key to their resolution. I am certain that this program will be a successful example that we can bring to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) when it reviews international forests issues in 1995," Mr. Ouellet said.

"Together, Canada and Russia account for almost 35 percent of the world's forests. It is essential that we share our knowledge and expertise to co-operate and preserve the world's forests for future generations. The International Model Forests Program enables nations to work together toward this important goal," Ms. McLellan said.

A Russian delegation, headed by the Chairman of the Russian Federal Forest Service, is visiting Canada this week to view several Canadian model forest sites. The delegation is developing a proposal for the Russian site, to be located in the eastern Siberian territory of Khabarovsk, approximately 500 km north of Vladivostock.

The establishment of a Russian model forest highlights international co-operative efforts to develop sustainable forest management practices on a global scale for the protection of the world's forests.

A backgrounder on the International Model Forests Program is attached.

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## Backgrounder

### THE INTERNATIONAL MODEL FORESTS PROGRAM

The International Model Forests Program was announced by Canada at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The first stage of the program is the establishment of model forests in three countries, building on Canada's domestic Model Forests Program now being implemented. Total funding of \$10 million, or approximately \$3.3 million for each of the three international partners, is provided by the Green Plan International Partnerships Fund administered by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

A model forest is a working forest managed on sound environmental principles by a partnership of government, industry, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and Indigenous and community groups. The forest may be used for a variety of purposes, including timber production, conservation, wildlife habitat and ecotourism. In balancing these and other activities, model forest sites demonstrate sustainable forest management in action by meeting both economic and environmental goals.

The International Model Forests Program supports key Canadian foreign policy objectives. It fulfils a number of commitments made in Rio de Janeiro as part of Agenda 21, including the provision of new and additional financial resources and the promotion of technology transfer. The program also addresses a fundamental obstacle to progress toward a Global Forests Convention: the absence of a clearly understood definition of sustainable forest management. The program does not promote any one definition; rather, it proposes criteria such as multiple forest values (i.e. protection of wildlife, habitat, watershed protection, cultural values, harvesting, etc.) and the need to develop local solutions through participatory decision making involving government, industry, NGOs, community and Indigenous groups.

The long-term objective of the International Model Forests Program is for nations to arrive together at a better understanding of sustainable forest management through international co-operation, both in building working-scale projects and in maintaining an interactive network among all participants.

Russia is the second of three participants in the International Model Forests Program. Mexico was the first country to accept the Canadian invitation, and two sites are being established in that country. The third partner has not yet been confirmed.

### **The Gassinskoe Model Forest in Russia**

The Gassinskoe model forest in Russia's Khabarovsk Territory will include over 270,000 hectares of forest land, primarily consisting of pine and broad-leaved trees. Partners in the model forest include the Forest Service of the Khabarovsk Territory, an Association of Indigenous Peoples and the Gassinskoe forest farm. Activities within the forest include timber production and the harvesting of a variety of nuts and berries. The model forest will focus on the development of better integrated forest management and a more effectively managed infrastructure to develop and support forest activities.

The main objectives of the Gassinskoe Model Forest Project will be:

1. sustainable forest management and use;
2. integrated management of all forest resources and their processing into finished products;
3. protection of forests from fires and pests;
4. establishment of plantations of Korean pine, Manchurian nut, Manchurian ash, and Ayan spruce through rehabilitation of low-value forests;
5. adoption of methods of integrated resources management that meet world standards; and
6. recognition of the traditional rights of Aboriginal populations in all forest management activities.

### **Canada's Model Forest Network**

The development of Canada's network of model forests is the core of the Partnership for Sustainable Development of Forests, the major forestry component of the Green Plan, the federal government's comprehensive environmental action plan.

The Model Forests Program establishes a network of large-scale projects that represent the major forest regions of Canada. The network also represents a variety of values, such as wildlife, biodiversity, watersheds and fisheries, in addition to the traditional value of fibre supply. The network is intended to demonstrate, on a working scale, how to manage forest ecosystems within the context of sustainable development.