

# Forestry *our renewable future*

## Mistik Management Ltd. takes homegrown approach to forest management

by Jeannie Armstrong  
SP Creative Features Editor

**A**s stewards of 1.8 million hectares of boreal mixed wood forest surrounding Meadow Lake, Mistik Management Ltd. (Mistik) has succeeded in balancing community, environmental and economic interests.

The forest management company is 50 per cent owned by NorSask Forest Products, which in turn is wholly owned by the Meadow Lake Tribal Council (MLTC). Meadow Lake Pulp Partnership, which operates the Millar Western Pulp Mill, holds the remaining 50 per cent stake.

Established in December of 1989, Mistik oversees the harvest of softwood for the NorSask sawmill. Hardwood harvested in the Forest Management Area (FMA) is utilized by the Millar Western Pulp Mill. Mistik is also responsible for renewal of harvested areas, which includes the planting of approximate-

ly four million seedlings per year.

Mistik's forest management plans are the result of extensive and ongoing consultations with local communities and land base users. Some of the communities within and adjacent to the FMA include Meadow Lake, Glaslyn, Dorintosh, Goodsoil, Pierceland, Loon Lake, Green Lake, Waterhen, Canoe Narrows, Jans Bay, Cole Bay, Beauval, Ile a la Crosse, Buffalo Narrows, St. Georges Hill, Michele Village and Dillon.

"Our vision is a reflection of the communities' vision. This is a 'peopled' forest. Much of the forest is located on traditional First Nation land. From day one, our feeling at Mistik has been that local people have to share in the benefits - from the day that tree is cut down, to the day that tree is replanted," says Mistik General Manager Ty Rutzki.

Consultations are held regularly with eight community-based management boards. "When we go to co-management meetings, we're meeting with First Nations Elders,

Chiefs and their council members, mayors, hunters, trappers, wild rice harvesters... we try to cover all the bases," says Rutzki.

"We take our operating plans and our cutting plans and go out into the communities. We hold open houses. We do helicopter trips, showing people where we're cutting the trees, where we're putting the roads, how big the harvesting blocks are."

Planning Manager Al Balisky says, "We're an open book. We're in the spotlight continuously. Our co-management boards make us accountable."



Mistik meets regularly with eight co-management boards, comprised of community members and land base users, to discuss forest management plans and concerns.

Mistik goes even further, paying co-management boards a fee of 50 cents per cubic meter of timber harvested within their respective management units. The co-management boards have complete control over the fees paid. For example, the Buffalo River Dene Nation uses the money to fund a land resource co-ordinator who can advise band officials on many aspects of resource management.

"Most issues come down to land use issues. Many members of the community want to protect core values - whether it's trapping, sustenance hunting. I think we've done a reasonable job as we've gone through the last 15 years," says Balisky.

"We've been building relationships in the community for a long time. Now we've got a personal history with them. We're not seen as outsiders," says Rutzki. "In the early 1990s, we could only say 'trust us' and shake their hand. Fifteen years later, we can actually take peo-



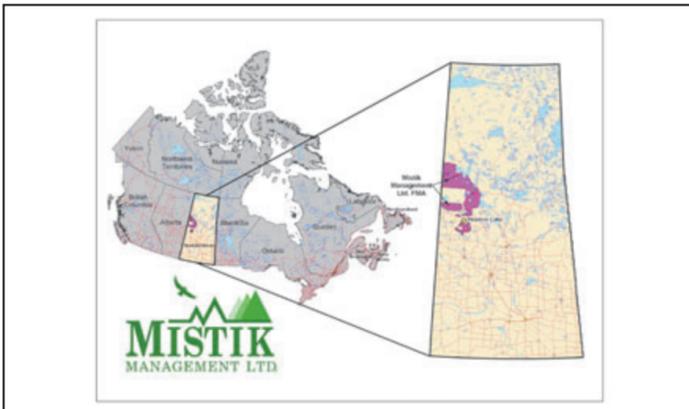
Seed cones are harvested by seasonal workers from individual forest blocks within the FMA. Tree nurseries use the seed cones to produce seedlings which will be planted in the same forest block the cones were collected from.



Mistik plants approximately four million seedlings each year, as part of its forest renewal activities. Tree planting contracts are issued to 12 local contractors, who create hundreds of seasonal jobs.

ple back to the forests we have replanted and show them the growth."

Mistik's reforestation activities meet provincial government regu-  
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Mistik Management Ltd. holds the license to 1.8 million hectares of boreal mixed wood forest surrounding Meadow Lake. The company oversees harvesting and reforestation activities in the Forest Management Area (FMA) on behalf of NorSask Forest Products and the Meadow Lake Pulp Partnership.

## Mistik Magic

Where sound business and smart policy meet



*Mistik Management Ltd.* does more than manage the forest and deliver timber to the NorSask sawmill and Meadow Lake Pulp Mill. Mistik delivers solid social, environmental and economic benefits, so those who live in surrounding communities share in the wealth of the land:



- 70% of Mistik's annual work is done by people of Aboriginal ancestry
- 90% of Mistik's annual work is done by people living in the local Forest Management area

Mistik spends up to \$50 million every year bringing timber to the two mills,



renewing the forest and fulfilling its license obligations. Of that money, 80% remains in the local Forest Management Area with the remainder spent in Saskatchewan and Canada.



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