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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

"Timber Queens" Conference: Celebrating and Empowering Women in Forestry

TRURO HEIGHTS, NS – November 16, 2023 – The inaugural "Timber Queens" forestry conference, dedicated to women and womxn in the industry, concluded with an overwhelming display of empowerment and a commitment to shaping a more inclusive future for forestry. Held on November 1, 2023, in Truro, Nova Scotia, this groundbreaking event brought together women from diverse forestry backgrounds to connect, empower, and inspire.

"Timber Queens" set a powerful precedent as an inclusive and progressive gathering, emphasizing networking, relationship building, and starting conversations. Attendees forged vital connections and discussed the importance of mentorship and confidence building, with particular focus on the essential roles that women and womxn play in the industry.

The conference was designed to be a haven for networking, supporting one another, and professional development tailored to women. It provided a brave space for attendees to forge connections, share experiences, and build vital professional relationships.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion took center stage at the conference, highlighting worldviews, positionality, and privilege, and the work being done to dismantle stereotypes and foster diversity in the industry. Presenter Elizabeth Jessome with the Mi'kmaw Forestry Initiative said "Like forest ecosystems, human systems—social, political, economic, knowledge—are diverse, reflecting the worldviews and values of the communities and power dynamics that created them. In forestry, creating a resilient, inclusive industry requires us to reflect on our varied privileges, positionalities, and worldviews, preparing us to engage in difficult conversations with the aim of learning and growing together as a sector. It was inspiring to gather with a group of women to discuss opportunities and challenges related to our collective work in the Wabanaki forest!"

The event also featured presentations on the growth and goals of existing mentorship programs, and continuing conversations. The Building Confidence workshop led into breakout sessions, showcasing key components of confidence, goal setting, and embracing progress, and fostered enthusiastic engagement among attendees.

Participants did not hesitate to convey their enthusiasm. Julia McMillan with MacMillan Forest Inc. said "After 39 years of work in this sector, this was a first! An empowering day to inspire, engage and to form mentorships for women who share similar challenges and goals." Debbie Reeves of Murray A. Reeves Forestry Limited said "It was the best day I spent in a long time. The young women in the room were intelligent, warm, and friendly and many need the support those of us who have been through the challenges working in this male-dominated sector. Together we have the determination, vision, and knowledge to move the sector forward to a bright future and be proud of progress."

Organizer Heather Boyd, Executive Director of the Forestry Sector Council, expressed her excitement, saying, "Timber Queens has surpassed our expectations. It's not just a conference; it's a movement. We are dedicated to empowering women and womxn in forestry, championing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. It was exciting to see everyone walk away feeling empowered after the day."

The "Timber Queens" forestry conference marked a significant step towards reshaping the industry, empowering participants, forging a more inclusive and sustainable path forward, and driving positive change in the field of forestry. When women come together, incredible things really do happen.

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About the Forestry Sector Council:

The Forestry Sector Council is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to developing a skilled and professional workforce for the Nova Scotia forest industry. Its strategic priorities are talent attraction and retention, training and skill development, and human resource planning. Cultivating a workforce like our forests—*sustainable, diverse, and growing*.

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