

INDIGENOUS AWARENESS TRAINING FIELD BULLETIN

NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

Many non-timber forest products provide food, medicines, and other materials of value that are vital to Indigenous Peoples' cultures and wellbeing. Cultural practices related to non-timber forest products often bring Indigenous people into areas of forest operations.

WHAT ARE NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS?

Non-timber forest products, or NTFPs, are any products that come from forests other than round wood or wood chips, which are often the primary focus of commercial forest operations.

Many non-timber forest products are highly valued by Indigenous Peoples because of their important cultural, spiritual, wellbeing, and economic value.

These products may be deeply connected with Indigenous Peoples' rights and traditional knowledge.

Non-timber forest products of value to Indigenous Peoples may include:

- Plants used for food, such as seeds, fruits, nuts, and mushrooms
- Food products derived from plants, like maple syrup or honey
- Medicinally important plant species, such as cedar
- Animals that may be used for food, like moose, elk, or grouse
- Firewood and construction materials for personal or community use
- Natural materials for sacred and ceremonial items, like turtle shells for rattles
- Fur bearing animals, like beaver or mink, used in clothing or regalia

CULTURAL PRACTICES IN FORESTS

For many Indigenous cultures, **forests are a place for essential practices** such as hunting, trapping, gathering, and storytelling that go back since time immemorial. These practices are the basis for **Indigenous Peoples' traditional forest-related knowledge**.

Forests are also a place where traditional knowledge is passed between Elders and youth, to ensure its preservation for future generations. This often occurs through forest-related cultural practices.

Visit forests.org/indigenous-online-courses to learn more.

RESPECTING CULTURAL PRACTICES IN FOREST OPERATIONS

While on a forest road or harvest block, **you may encounter an Indigenous person setting a trap line, harvesting food or medicine, or collecting other non-timber forest products.** You may also encounter groups of Indigenous people engaging in cultural practices.

It's important to remember that these cultural practices may be tied to protected Aboriginal or treaty rights. SFI certification, for example, requires a program that includes communicating with local Indigenous Peoples to protect culturally important sites.

Foresters and forest workers must therefore respect Indigenous Peoples' cultural practices in planning forest operations and conducting practices. This includes having procedures and training for forest workers, to ensure Indigenous cultural land-users remain safe and respected when in vicinity of forest operations (ex: a road or block).



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Many non-timber forest products provide food, medicines, and other materials vital to Indigenous Peoples' cultures and wellbeing.
2. Indigenous Peoples' cultural practices are protected by Canadian law and forest certifications, like the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.
3. Forest workers must be trained and implement forest practices to ensure that Indigenous people using the forest are safe and respected.

TAILGATE DISCUSSION

Are you aware of any cultural practices that may bring Indigenous people to this block?

What do you do if you encounter an Indigenous person or group activity during operations?