

# Summer Students at EMEND

## High School Students Learn about Boreal Research at EMEND

As it has done for the past four or so years, the Boreal Forest Research Centre sponsored a work placement for two high school students this past summer, giving them a unique opportunity to get hands-on exposure to ongoing research at the EMEND (Ecosystem Management Emulating Natural Disturbance) site.

Before heading to EMEND, Lisa Roy, a student at Fairview High, and Nathan Stillwell, in grade 12 at Peace River High, stayed a week at NAIT's Fairview campus in early July to learn things such as chainsaw safety, ATV safety and aspects of the forest sector at the Forestry camp. From there, the adventurous pair continued their boreal experience by heading off to EMEND, the world class forest research site located in the vast Chinchaga mixedwood forest about 50 kilometers west of Highway 35, halfway between Peace River and Manning.



*Nathan Stillwell measuring shrub biomass. This task is done in a 1-metre square area on each and every tree/shrub over 1 inch in diameter.*

### Work at EMEND

Lisa and Nathan were put right to work, assisting the EMEND core crew in collecting on-site shrub biomass data and doing snag assessments in various block strata.

One didn't know what lay ahead. The other had an idea of what was in store. Both came away with an appreciation for the research that supports a sustainable approach to forest management, and an awareness of the natural diversity of Alberta's boreal forest.

The six day work week entailed breakfast and then plot sampling from 8 in the morning until about 5:30 p.m. They also helped with moth traps, part of a study by one of several researchers utilizing EMEND for their own bio-diversity studies.

"I didn't know what to expect, it was all new to me," recalled Nathan, who learned about the EMEND summer work opportunity from his CTS teacher, Mr. Mark Ladd. "I'm interested in a lot of things, that includes learning about forestry, so I thought it would be a good opportunity," he said.

Lisa Roy, in grade 12, learned about the summer job from her school counselor. She had applied in grade 10, but withdrew because she felt too young for the demands of a summer in the bush. This year, she definitely took the opportunity.

EMEND was "very much" what she expected, having spent an overnight camp at EMEND as a Girl Guide. "I loved it out there, I had so much fun," she said

### Launching into a bright future

Nathan and Lisa were part of the core crew which mainly consists of university students. Students have been adding to the data on biomass and other parameters at EMEND since 1998; data that's already starting to be compiled for utilization by forest managers. Long term results will hopefully be used to guide forestry policy. It's something that Lisa is excited to be part of.

"I love the environment. I want to go to university or college and move into that kind of career," she said. She intends to enroll at BC's Northwest Community College in coastal integrated resources management. The two year diploma will leave her options open, for a possible follow up at the University of British Columbia in a renewable resources program.

"The EMEND summer job is very valuable. It gives people an appreciation of how everything affects the environment. I would definitely recommend it to another person," said Lisa.

The experience was definitely worth it, said Nathan, who used the summer to start exploring possible career paths. "I really loved being outside, and also learning about the different plants. I want to check out a lot of things in terms of my future career," he said. Though Nathan knows this was just a 'sound byte' of what the forest sector entails, "it was definitely an eye opener for what's involved in forestry," he said.



*Lisa in her mosquito netting; ready for the workday.*