

The National Forest Week tour of "**Ask Me If I'm a Tree**" took place between May 6 and 10, 2002. It consisted of 12 performances in 9 schools. It reached a diverse range of Newfoundland communities including: Curling, Corner Brook, Deer Lake, Badger, Robert's Arm and Grand Falls Windsor. Teachers kits, posters, book covers, book marks and pencils were distributed reaching over 1900 students and teachers. The following table provides specific details of the tour.

School	Location	Date	#of performances	Students
St Gerrard's Elementary	Corner Brook	06/05	1	70
Elwood Primary	Deer Lake	07/05	1	176
CC Laughlin	Corner Brook	07/05	2	549
Humber Elementary	Corner Brook	08/05	2	399
Sacred Heart Elementary	Curling	08/05	1	71
Sprucewood Academy	Grand Falls / Windsor	09/05	1	163
Millcrest Academy	Grand Falls / Windsor	09/05	2	310
Green Bay South Academy	Robert's Arm	10/05	1	91
Avoca Collegiate	Badger	10/05	1	83
<b>9 schools</b>	<b>Total</b>			<b>1912 students</b>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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"ASK ME IF I'M A TREE", EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCES  
FOR NATIONAL FOREST WEEK

National Forest Week (May 5 to 11) will go off with a bang this year as performances of "Ask Me If I'm A Tree" - an educational clown show about forest ecology - will be presented in schools throughout Newfoundland.

Reviewed by foresters and educators, "Ask Me If I'm A Tree" teaches primary and elementary students about a variety of forest topics including: Biodiversity, life cycles, photosynthesis, the forest's role in water and air quality and the over all importance of the forests in our daily lives.

"Ask Me If I'm A Tree" is not only educational, but fun. Seasoned children's entertainer - Nova Scotia native Jim Dalling delights students with his original blend of puppetry, physical comedy and mask work.

"Ask Me If I'm A Tree" is being presented by the Western Newfoundland Model Forest, Natural Resources Canada Canadian Forest Service - Atlantic, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, and, Corner Brook, Forest Capital of Canada 2002.

"Ask Me If I'm A Tree" will be performed at the following locations and times:

Mon, May 6 1:30pm, St Gerard's Elementary Corner Brook

Tu, May 7 9:30am, Elwood Elementary, Deer Lake

Tu, May 7 12:45pm CC Loughlin Elementary, Corner Brook

Tu, May 7 1:45pm CC Loughlin Elementary, Corner Brook

Wed May 8 8:30am Humber Elementary, Corner Brook

Wed May 8 10:15am Humber Elementary

Wed May 8 12:40 pm Sacred Heart Elementary, Corner Brook

Th. May 9 10:30am Sprucewood Academy, Grand Falls

Th. May 9 1:30pm Greenbay South Academy, Roberts Arms

Fr. May 10 1pm Millcrest Academy, Grand Falls

Fr. May 10 2pm Millcrest Academy, Grand Falls

For more information, contact Sheila Robinson of the Western Newfoundland Model Forest at 637-7304, or Jim Dalling at [jimdalling@gosympatico.ca](mailto:jimdalling@gosympatico.ca)

"Ask Me If I'm A Tree", Spring Tour

Cost Proposal for Corner Brook and Grand Falls Performances

Date: May 6 to 10, 2002 (National Forest Week)

Corner Brook Performances

3 shows (separate schools) \$400 per show = \$1200  
2 shows (4 shows / school) \$350 per show = \$1400

Corner Brook Performance Cost: \$2600

Grand Falls Performances

5 shows (separate schools) \$400 per show = \$2000


Travel Expenses

Ferry expenses (Marine Atlantic) \$183.50 return  
Hotel costs (5 nights May 5 - 9) \$85/ night = \$425

12 performances total cost = 5208.50

Mileage and food expenses are included in performance cost.

A deposit of 50% of total contract is required upon signing to secure the contract and the final 50% to be paid upon completion.



April 2, 2002

Western Newfoundland Model Forest

Dear Mrs. Robinson:

I'm writing to offer you an opportunity to purchase a block of performances of *ASK ME IF I'M A TREE*, a physical theatre educational clown show, the theme forest ecology and sustainable forest management. *ASK ME IF I'M A TREE* is aimed at grades 3 to 5 but is appropriate for all elementary students.

Topics covered include:

- The forest's role in air and water quality
- Forest products
- Forest cycles & life cycles
- Biodiversity
- Decomposition
- Conservation
- Recreational use
- Transpiration
- Wildlife habitat
- Good harvest practices

Singin' Fish Theatricals' *ASK ME IF I'M A TREE* can be an excellent opportunity for Western Newfoundland Model Forest to help youth understand the importance of our forests.

The following proposal includes a detailed show description, photographs, letters of endorsement, teacher comments and a detailed outline of the opportunities and costs. *ASK ME IF I'M A TREE* is rehearsed, ready and can be delivered immediately. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

jim dalling

clown  
129a Roncesvalles ave  
Toronto On.  
M6R 2L2  
416.535.6724  
be\_a\_clown@hotmail.com



## Show Description

*ASK ME IF I'M A TREE* is 45 minutes in length and consists of several clown sketches. Using humor, slapstick comedy, masks, puppets, stories and songs *ASK ME IF I'M A TREE* delights and amazes students while teaching them about forest ecology and how the forest and contributes to all our lives.



Launched during the winter of 2002 *ASK ME IF I'M A TREE* is an original production reviewed by foresters, scientists, educational specialists and teachers. The show maintains a delicate balance of humour and content to capture the students' attention while integrating learning. The shows messaging focuses on the three key components of sustainable forest management – the forest contribution to our environment, social needs and economy – while teaching basic forest ecology.

Sketches include: "What's Stomata With You?" "The Song of The Worm" and "Grump the Stump". While students laugh at Wooglestink the worm's lyrics: "[soil] enters me through my big mouth then goes out the other way" they retain a great deal of information.

*"He was so entertaining, but the kids also learned a lot. I questioned them after we got back to the classroom and they knew the answers."*

*Nancy St-Laurent Teacher, Uniacke District School.*

Topics covered in *ASK ME IF I'M A TREE* include the role of the forest in air and water quality, forest products, forest cycles, biodiversity, decomposition, transpiration, animal habitat, conservation and good harvesting practices.

Audience participation is vital to *ASK ME IF I'M A TREE*. No where is this more evident than in the final scene where two students are invited to the stage. They become trees in the forest, keeping river water cool, holding soil in place breathing and providing homes for animals. In this section buffer zones are demonstrated, the children play as bears and skunks and the entire school feels included as they watch their friends acting out on stage.

*"The built in repetition of information was very effective. Students retained a great deal."*  
*Teacher comment, Astral Drive Elementary.*

The performance concludes with a quiz section, where the students are asked specific and challenging questions based on the show's content. The principal is then awarded a 'Golden Leaf for the schools "Excellent forest Knowledge"'.  
*"Jim Dalling can make kids how with laughter one minute and quiet things to deliver a science lesson about forestry the next. Kids like laughing. Teachers like to see learning."*  
*Todd Mackay, Nova Newsnet*





## Project Opportunity

Purchase a block of performances of *ASK ME IF I'M A TREE*, (minimum 4 performances)

Cost \$400.00 per performance.

Average reach to date is 200 students per performance – audiences have been as large as 350 students and as small as 75 students

Shows to be performed within the constituency of the Western Newfoundland Model Forest, a reasonable distance from each other.

Booking of performances responsibility of Singin' Fish Theatricals

## Recognition Opportunities for the Western Newfoundland Model Forest:

Opportunity to set up a display on site in schools

Logo recognition: If Western Newfoundland Model Forest has a logo that can be reproduced as a badge, it can be worn on my hat in the performance.

Mention as a presenting sponsor

## Residual Opportunities:

Opportunity to distribute relevant materials i.e.: activity books, pins, relating to the forest or Western Newfoundland Model Forest's activities.

Gold leaf applause program:

At the end of the question period I award the school a "Golden Leaf" in recognition of the school's excellent forest knowledge. This award would be presented to the principal at the end of the show and would say:

Singing Fish Theatricals and (your name + logo here) applaud (school name) for excellent forest knowledge.

School can then proudly display this beautiful golden leaf shaped award in a prominent space as a reminder of the great performance they saw.





## Bio of Jim Dalling:

A graduate of both Dalhousie University and The Dell Arte International School of Physical Theatre, Jim is a seasoned family entertainer.

Throughout his career, Jim has demonstrated a commitment to bringing exciting educational theatre to isolated areas in unconventional ways. In 1995 he toured Canada with Generation 2000, performing over 100 shows in high schools from Nanaimo B.C. to St. Albans Newfoundland. "Tools For Change" dealt with concerns of youth ranging from apathy and racism to biodiversity. With The Green Kids 1997 school tour Jim entertained elementary school children in the Winnipeg area with a performance that taught the audience what they could do every day, at home to help the planet.

Perhaps Jim's most unconventional theatre experience to date came in 1999, when he toured the eastern seaboard of the United States aboard the Caravan Theatre's 90' tall ship The Amara Zee. As both a crewmember and actor, he sailed to small towns and large cities performing in "Trapped, a Whale of a Tale" – a ninety-minute play based on Farley Mowatt's controversial "A Whale for the Killing".

Jim has also appeared in festivals in Halifax, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton and San Francisco. He is a regular performer at Clown Hall and The S.P.A.C.E. in Toronto. In 2001 Jim has appeared as 'Felix' in Sudbury Theatre Centers' production of Pinocchio. Most recently Jim has developed and performed *ASK ME IF I'M A TREE* an educational theatre piece on forest ecology and sustainable forest management.

## Teacher Feedback

What areas of your current curriculum did Ask Me If I'm A Tree cover or touch on?

1. Science – parts of trees and kinds – Health – trees give us air – Social Studies – environment – language arts – use of all the “tree” reific words appropriate for this unit – Drama
2. Covered general tree and plant life information forest animals and their relationships
3. Habitat – science grade 4
4. Making them more aware of their natural environment
5. Current grade 3 curriculum has a focus on trees and the life cycle in the forest
6. Science – plant growth and change
7. The ecology of the forest

Would you recommend the show to other teachers and/or schools, please explain why or why not.

1. Definitely! The presenter caught the children’s attention (as well as the teachers) with his dramatic fun approach.
2. Yes the delivery was entertaining with a good mix and humor and content. The use of props was very beneficial
3. Yes even if not directly tied to curriculum the show contains information that young people should have to make decisions about.
4. Yes, it certainly maintained the attention of the students. Humor and learning were very effective
5. Yes it certainly maintained the attention of the students. Humor and learning were very effective
6. Yes it was very entertaining and held the interest of the audience
7. Yes for grade 2 to 5 more content is needed above that level

What was your favorite section.

1. I found all sections beneficial for my curriculum and grade level
2. Presentation was everything, material presented in a humorous way, kids really enjoyed the presenter and as a result learned a tremendous amount of information
3. The amount of content that was included
4. The stomata and the stump – Kids comments – very funny
5. Grump the Stump
6. Value of trees to environment and society
7. The whole presentation kept everyone’s attention and it was educational too.
8. I enjoyed the show. The actor was amazing – very versatile
9. The entertaining delivery

## Letters of Support

Feb 12, 2002

To: Kelly Cowper,  
Communications Coordinator  
Nova Forest Alliance.

From: Nancy St. Laurent,  
Gr. 2 Teacher,  
Uniacke District School

Thank you so much for the presentation "Ask Me If I'm A Tree?" by Mr. Dalling. It was informative and entertaining. He was very capable of keeping the children's interest and maintaining control. A super job.

Thanks again for such a beneficial program. Best wishes for continued success.

Sincerely,

Nancy E. St. Laurent

PS I didn't know until today how important tree stumps are to the environment



Friday February 15, 2002

Via email  
To Whom It May Concern;

Jim Dalling's presentation of, "ASK ME IF I AM A TREE" was staged at our school on February 8, 2002. The play is a wonderfully entertaining medium designed to educate students to the marvels of the forest complex. It was appropriate for the grade levels in our school (P-6) . It held everyone's attention, it was delivered with humor and great intelligence, and it respected the audience for which it was intended. I highly recommend this live production and wish it the success it deserves.

Sincerely,

Dan Archibald  
Principal  
Willow Street School  
18 Willow St.  
Truro N.S.  
896-5780



Regional Services Division  
664 Prince St., P O Box 68  
Truro, NS B2N 5B8

Tel (902) 893-5629  
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*March 7, 2002*

*To Whom It May Concern:*

*Having been involved with forestry youth education for many years, I can't say enough good things about Jim Dalling's "Ask Me If I'm A Tree" one man play which I had the pleasure of watching recently. Jim obviously enjoys entertaining, educating and interacting with children. He has cleverly and energetically put together a one man play that has a good fast pace, is very entertaining, but the best part from my perspective, is that it is very educational.*

*Jim has obviously put a great amount of consideration and effort into putting this presentation together in order to make the best impact on the young audience. If this presentation is indicative of his work I wouldn't hesitate to recommend him for future work.*

*Don Cameron  
Regional Forester  
NS Dept. of Natural Resources*