



Coalition Update

About the BC Coalition

Welcome to the first of a series of bi-monthly newsletters from the BC Coalition for Implementation of the National Forest Strategy (the Coalition). It is our intent to produce a newsletter once every two months to address issues that relate to BC's progress in addressing the National Forest Strategy (NFS) themes.

We will be asking Coalition members to write about highlights of what BC is doing well and also to identify where gaps exist in our attempts to make BC a world leader in sustainable forest management.

About the National Forest Strategy:

The National Forest Strategy 2003-2008 is the fifth consecutive national strategy for the forest sector since 1981. The strategy was developed by a broad based group of government and non-government organizations known as the National Forest Strategy Coalition.

The NFS is organized around eight broad strategic themes, each supported by several action items.

1. Ecosystem-based management
2. Sustainable forest communities
3. Rights and participation of Aboriginal Peoples
4. Forest products benefits
5. Knowledge & innovation for competitiveness and sustainability
6. The urban forest and public engagement in sustainability
7. Private woodlots contribution to sustainability
8. Reporting and accountability.

About Theme #1—Ecosystem Based Management

The first theme in the NFS document is Ecosystem-based management. An ecosystem-based approach to managing our natural resources recognizes that the social and economic benefits the forest provides over the long term rests on the ecological integrity of the forest.

Under this theme the national objective is to

“manage Canada’s natural forest using an ecosystem-based approach that maintains forest health, structure, functions, composition and biodiversity, and includes but is not limited to:

- Using integrated land-use planning, especially before tenure allocation;
- Maintaining natural forest ecosystems;
- Completing a system of representative protected areas;
- On a national basis, maintaining carbon reservoirs and managing the forest to be a net carbon sink, over the long term; and
- Conserving old-growth forests and threatened forest ecosystems.

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The information and opinions contained herein are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of all members of the coalition.

Progress “Snapshot”

At a workshop held in Prince George in February 2005, participants were asked to identify accomplishments and gaps in BC’s implementation of the National Forest Strategy. A number of accomplishments were identified, many of which were well underway before this strategy was adopted. Some of these accomplishments are outlined below:

- The regulatory regime for forest practices was given high marks in a report by International Forest Resources and Yale Professor Ben Cashore;
- Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMP’s) have been completed for most of the province. These are consensus based, stakeholder planning processes that make recommendations to cabinet.
- A network of protected areas and special management areas covering 12.5% of the province was in place by 2002 and work is continuing.
- A comprehensive timber supply review and analysis process is well established and continuing. The process takes into account the social, economic and environmental objectives in land use plans, and generates allowable annual cut (AAC) determinations;
- Timber harvesting has been redirected into areas affected by major forest fires and mountain pine beetle

damage; and

- Numerous applications of ecosystem-based management are being implemented and landscape level management objectives include identification of forest ecosystem networks (FEN’s) and old growth management areas (OGMA’s).

These and many other initiatives and practices put British Columbia well ahead of many jurisdictions and demonstrate a strong commitment to achieving the objectives of the National Forest Strategy.

The participants did, however, identify two important areas needing attention in BC. The first is the relationship between First Nations and other governments and forest sector stakeholders. Although this concern will be dealt with in more detail in our newsletter featuring Theme 3, four key points are noted here because of their impact on fully achieving Ecosystem-based management:

- Most of British Columbia’s First Nations have not signed treaties with the Crown, and the treaty making process has been slow and often frustrating, creating uncertainty and straining relationships;
- First Nations have generally not participated in development of Land and Resource Management Plans. Although there are a small number of exceptions, it cannot be said that

the perspectives and interests of aboriginal peoples are adequately reflected in the plans ;

- Most First Nations seek to undertake a new land use planning process since they were not involved in the LRMPs; and
- First Nations strongly assert that they have not been adequately consulted or involved in the forest policy making process, and that this creates inequity and uncertainty that must be addressed.

The coalition will invite a guest commentary on the topic of First Nations participation in a future newsletter.

The second area of concern is the structure of the province’s forest policy. There is a risk that our ability as a province to fully achieve integrated, long-term sustainable forest management is inhibited by the present policy model. The risk is rooted in an historic tendency in BC to focus management activities on site-level forest practices and overlook the broader forest-level stewardship implications. Dr. Gordon Weetman has provided a commentary on this subject (next page), building on the work of Dr. Gordon Baskerville, a well know and outspoken advocate of forest-level stewardship.

Coalition Supporters and Participants

The following organizations and individuals have participated in some of the activities of the Coalition:

- Association of BC Forest Professionals
- Bill Bourgeois
- Canadian Forest Products
- Canadian Forest Service
- Canadian Model Forest Network
- Canadian Silviculture Association
- Council of Forest Industries
- Federation of BC Woodlot Associations
- FERIC
- FORREX
- Fraser Basin Council
- Marlie Beets
- McGregor Model Forest Association
- Mike Apsey
- Ministry of Environment
- Ministry of Agriculture & Lands
- Ministry of Forests & Range
- National Forest Strategy Coalition
- Paprican
- R. Keith Jones & Associates
- University of British Columbia
- University of Northern BC
- Union of BC Municipalities
- Venture Forest Consulting Inc.
- Whiskey Jack Forest Sciences

Commentary - Dr. Gordon Weetman



Dr. Gordon Weetman

The following commentary by Dr. Gordon Weetman builds on the work of Dr. Gordon Baskerville, a well known and outspoken advocate of forest-level stewardship. Dr. Weetman begins by asking:

“Is BC meeting the Baskerville criteria for good stewardship of the public forest?”

Based on Baskerville’s criteria, good stewardship is signified by the following characteristics:

- The manager thinking in terms of managing “the forest”, for a range of values as opposed to managing a collection of stands each towards an independent end;
- The manager having a long-headed view of the forest, and of the values in it at least the equivalent of one rotation;
- The manager having an ability to learn from the forest; figuratively the manager is able to “listen to”, and learn from, the forest as it develops over the years;
- The manager staying in place, and learning in place, over periods long enough for a human to acquire a sense of change in the forest;
- The manager developing powers of observation, and understanding, with respect to the structure and function of the forest system being managed; and
- The manager developing a systematic approach to recording what is learned, and embedding that learning in an evolving management system.

Whereas poor stewardship is characterized by:

- The manager has a short time horizon, and a tendency to treat the uncertainty of the future as an excuse for not attempting to manage;
- The manager considering only the stand level, as if stand management were independent of the time and space domains of the forest (200,000 ha/ 100 years);
- The manager following contemporary public views on acceptability of tools, rather than developing an ability to use tools in a biologically effective manner;
- The manager having little temporal and spatial context for actions taken in the forest and exhibiting an “in & out” approach to treatment without long term commitment to the emergent state of the forest as a whole; and
- The only paradigm of the manager is maximizing net present value of timber at the level of the stand.

“..most of the BC forest estate has no long-term forest management plans”

Unfortunately, British Columbia’s management of public forest does not yet fully reflect the good stewardship criteria, described by Dr. Baskerville and some aspects of poor stewardship characteristics can be observed. Dr. George Hoberg of the University of BC has noted that the land use planning process produces objectives for zones but they are relatively limited and uneven in application. He also notes that while Tree Farm Licenses, which account for about 21% of the annual timber harvest, require detailed management plans with content requirements set out in the *Forest Act* and approval by the Chief Forester. Forest Licenses and Timber Sale Licenses, accounting for about 69% of the annual timber harvest require no strategic plans. As a result, most of the BC forest estate has no long term strategic forest manage-

ment plans. There is no identification of “an emerging state of the forest as a whole” as a Desired Future Forest (DFF) for the Timber Supply Areas (TSA’s).

Across Canada, area-based tenures are the norm on Crown lands (100% in Ontario & Quebec, 69% and 83% in Alberta and Saskatchewan and 41% in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick). This situation exists because provincial governments are not well positioned to directly manage Crown Forests. Canadian experience has shown that assignment of management obligations to the industry under area based tenures can deliver the management continuity, efficiencies and innovations needed to meet the challenges of long term sustainability. Under negotiated forest management agreements, companies are held to the requirements of a long-term strategic plan for a given management unit. This allows for adaptation to changing conditions, innovation and ultimately to a sustainable system. The approach presently in use in BC relies more on short term operational plans focused on compliance with a code of practices.

BC set out to expand the use of area-based tenures on at least two occasions in the past, however the initiatives fell short due to public controversy about trusting forest companies to manage for public values. A more recent initiative by the province to move incrementally to area-based management (the defined forest area management or DFAM policy), failed to be implemented.

The result of this situation is that while BC may have comprehensive regulations forest practices, and ecologically appropriate approaches to site-level management, there is no sound institutional framework to ensure sustainable forest management at a forest level over the majority of the public forest estate. This is a challenge that can be remedied by a serious commitment to policy reform that would see forest managers exhibit the characteristics of good stewardship described above.

About the BC Coalition for Implementation of the National Forest Strategy

Mission: To have BC become known as a world leader in sustainable forest management.

Purpose: The BC Coalition for Implementation of the National Forest Strategy (the Coalition) has been formed to promote the advancement of sustainable forest management in BC, working with the National Forest Strategy framework.

Membership in the Coalition

The Coalition is an informal organization without a charter or legal standing. The intent of the members is that it remains this way unless a need arises to incorporate or otherwise take a more structured approach.

A chair (Dr. Gordon Weetman) has been appointed and a steering committee has been struck to move the business of the Coalition forward. Meetings are convened and facilitated by an administrative secretariat. The secretariat is provided by the McGregor Model Forest Association.

New participants are encouraged to join the Coalition provided that they:

- Have signed the Canada Forest Accord, or espouse support for the National Forest Strategy (2003-2008) and membership conditions by letter and or communiqué; and
- Express a commitment to implement the strategy in a way that is appropriate to their circumstances and capabilities, through the delivery of action plans and/or involvement in strategic theme processes; or

- Express support for the Mission and Purpose of the BC Coalition, including its relationship with the National Forest Strategy Coalition.

Members of the coalition decided at an early meeting that a simple procedure is required to guide Coalition actions. As a Coalition of governmental and non-governmental organizations from across BC, it is important that the Coalition speak consistently on crucial matters that the majority of Coalition members agree to, and that the process to make decisions is clear, concise, open and transparent.

Steering Committee Members

The Steering Committee is made up of the Coalition Chair and at least three other coalition members. The mandate of the steering committee is to oversee planning, implementation, communications and reporting of the Coalition activities, and provide direction to the Secretariat on behalf of the members.

Current members of the Steering Committee are:

- Gordon Weetman - UNBC (Chair)
 - Bill Bourgeois - Consultant
 - Chris Hollstedt - FORREX
 - Mike Apsey - Past Chair, National Forest Strategy Coalition
 - Ken Baker - Forestry Innovation Investment Ltd.
 - Jim Snetsinger - Ministry of Forests and Range
 - Dirk Brinkman - Brinkman & Associates
 - Al Gorley - McGregor Model Forest Association
 - Mike Millard - MMFA - Secretary
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