

JOHN INNES – BC Forest Sector Facing a Crisis

John Innes, Dean, Faculty of Forestry, UBC, describes his view of the BC forest sector including the current situation and future needs (http://nzjf.org.nz/contents.php?volume_issue=j63_2). It is his view “The BC forest sector is facing a crisis as a result of a dwindling timber supply.” “....The significant innovation and investment that is occurring in Scandinavia is not present in BC, providing evidence that such a change is necessary if the BC forest sector is to maintain its importance. Much will depend on the political willpower to bring about the necessary changes.”

The following is the abstract from the paper.

“British Columbia’s forest sector is facing some significant challenges, with the most important being restrictions on timber supply brought about by disturbances and changes in governance of the land base. In the past the concept of a ‘working forest’ was proposed, defined as the forested land area that would be reserved for growing and harvesting timber. This would have prevented land from being selected for another purpose, such as reserves to protect biodiversity. While this idea has not received widespread acceptance, it is worth reconsidering but in a broader context. All forests ‘work’, but not all types of ‘work’ are recognised and given monetary values. However, we are seeing increasing numbers of examples where non-timber goods and services from forests are being assigned economic value, including wetland, biodiversity and carbon credits. These, combined with a move to higher value products coming from forests, could result in a renaissance of the sector. A clear, insightful and long-term plan needs to be developed by the agency (i.e. the Crown) responsible for the management of the land base.”

The call to action in deal with the crisis is not new. It was identified in the Healthy Forest-Healthy Communities dialogue of 2011-2012 (<http://bcforestconversation.com/restoring-bcs-forest-legacy/>). Government did nothing from this point until 2017. **Is Government doing enough now to deal with the situation which has become more critical?**