



June 1, 2023

Hon Bruce Ralston, Minister of Forests
Hon Katrine Conroy, Minister of Finance
Hon Brenda Bailey, Minister of Jobs, Economic Development, and Innovation
Hon George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Re: Importance of the forest inventory to achieving government goals.
(Sent via e-mail)

Dear Ministers:

I am directing this letter to all of you as your staffs will probably be using the BC forest inventory in achieving one or more of the government sub-goals associated with modernizing BC forest policy.

I would like to congratulate all of you and government for the decision to allocate \$38 million over 6 years to the collection of LiDAR imagery (<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023WLR50010-000512>). This may be insufficient to obtain full provincial coverage as recommended in the 2018 Blue-Ribbon Forest Inventory Report (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/forestry/stewardship/forest-analysis-inventory/panel_summary_report_final.pdf). However, it is a good start in fulfilling the modernization of forest policy goal. Allocating sufficient funding to complete the province should be a priority expenditure to achieve the long-term related BC Forest Asset goals. It is unfortunate it took five (5) years to begin implementing the recommendation, albeit in-part. Hopefully, this can be corrected soon.

If we are to capitalize on the full benefits of LiDAR, enhanced forest inventory data for use in forest management will be required. The Blue-Ribbon Panel also recommended action be taken on this topic. Ian Moss and myself (both members of the Panel), have previously encouraged government to build this into the budgeting allocations for the Ministry of Forests (<https://www.bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Letter-Minister-Conroy-re-Enhanced-Forest-Inventory.pdf>). It is unfortunate that it appears this has not been accepted by the Ministry of Forests and/or Treasury Board decision-makers while still emphasizing the desire to:

- Capture the full potential of resource values in the BC Forest Asset,
- Implement Forest Landscape Plans,

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Dedicated to progressive resource management.



- Provide fibre security for value-added investor decision-making,
- Provide opportunities for economic diversification decision-making in moving toward community resiliency, and
- Achieve ecosystem health through strategic level planning.

The enhanced forest inventory is a critical data base for these decisions! This may just be a lack of technical understanding among decision-makers regarding how these two components of the forest inventory support achieving the government goals. Graphic representations of the relationships between the forest inventory and these goals are attached for your information. In addition, the integration of LiDAR data with an enhanced forest management inventory will advance the usefulness of the LiDAR data.

As acknowledged in the Blue-Ribbon report recommendations, there may be challenges in Ministry implementation of these two key programs over a short period of time. However, it is critical that both decision-maker politicians and Ministry staff recognize their importance and give them the required priority within an internal strategic planning process. This is essential in realization of their importance in achieving the government goals in a timely manner. It must be recognized the LiDAR and enhanced forest inventory is a package! Achieving this will help in realizing the wisdom by the Chief Forester in establishing the Blue-Ribbon Panel to obtain advice on the content and quality of the inventory such that it will “prevent surprises when it is used as demands on the BC Forest Asset arise.” If we had this data now, the decisions regarding such topics as security of fibre for value-added investors and identification of critical old growth areas would be much more strongly supported. The collection and application of LiDAR and enhanced forest inventory data will go a long way in achieving fully capitalizing on the BC Forest Asset leading to community resiliency. I trust that you will be able to get the advice from the technical support staff to provide this guidance. If you have questions or need more information, please feel free to contact me.

Yours truly,

W.W. (Bill) Bourgeois PhD, RPF (Ret)

cc Ian Moss, PhD, RPF

Attachments

<https://www.bcforestconversation.com/category/forest-inventory/>