

BC FOREST RENEWAL VISION FRAMEWORK

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SUMMARY

Government has embarked upon the Revitalization/Renewal of the BC forest sector. This article provides a rationale, recommendations and implementation suggestions for a Provincial Forest Renewal Vision. The vision will achieve the Government's four (4) priority forest renewal goals and provide the infrastructure and necessary strategic regulation and policy actions to move to long-term forest stewardship and create a sustainable wood manufacturing sector that fully utilizes the available BC forest fibre. Seven (7) infrastructure recommendations and twelve (12) priority strategic regulation and policy recommendations are provided. The framework vision is intended to both update the current system and more effectively maintain and capitalize on the BC forest asset and subsequently community resiliency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The comments and recommendations are a summary of my experiences and thoughts along with those from a long list of knowledgeable and innovative academics, community people and forest and policy professionals concerned about the future of BC forests. I would like to thank all those who recently and over the years contributed to this paper. We can do better for the current and future citizens of BC.

BACKGROUND

The Government's forest sector Revitalization/Renewal Initiative, coupled with other challenges confronting the industry and communities, has created a "perfect storm" resulting in a crisis of uncertainty and stress. Government needs to build on the strengths of the forest sector and the BC forest asset through providing leadership in creating clarity in visions for the forest and the wood manufacturing sector and initiating a focused action plan. Leadership to move toward sustainability of the long-term stewardship of the forest and wood manufacturing sector as cornerstones for resiliency of forest-dependent communities is required.¹

Government has identified five (5) priority goals in revitalizing/renewal of the forest sector.

- 1) Rebuilding solid wood and secondary industries,
- 2) Improving harvest performance to ensure more fibre is available for domestic mills,
- 3) Fostering stronger business-to-business relationships,
- 4) Restoring public confidence and improving the social contract, and

¹ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/Addressing-uncertainty-and-stress.pdf>

5) Maintaining a credible auction system.

The focus of this paper is on the first four (4) goals.

Although these Government goals are important, the Revitalization/Renewal Initiative is an opportunity to address the need to action critical strategic actions necessary to realize the full potential of the provincial forest asset. Government needs to be clear and transparent on the direction and suggested changes to capitalize and support the current and potential innovation within the forest sector.

The following is an outline, with recommendations, of a vision and components for the renewal of the BC forest stewardship and wood manufacturing sectors as long-term sustainable contributors to resiliency of rural communities.

Detailed rationale, recommendations and suggested actions are included in the noted references.

Achieving this vision within the described framework will take several years of dedicated work by all members of the forest sector, Government, the bureaucracy and communities.² Dedication and perseverance will be required over more than one electoral mandate of Provincial and Municipal Governments. This is a journey not an event!

INFRASTRUCTURE

The current regulatory infrastructure (Forest Act, Forest and Range Practices Act, etc.) needs to be updated to be consistent with the proposed new forest resources vision arising out of the public comments and achieving the Government identified priority goals.

1) Provincial Forest Resources Goal

Although not clearly stated, it appears the Provincial forest resources goal is to: “promote resilient and diverse forest ecosystems to provide a sustainable flow of economically valuable timber that generates public revenue and supports robust communities and healthy economies for a vigorous, efficient and world-competitive timber processing industry.”³ This goal is limiting when considering all the resources in the BC forest. A clear and official Provincial forest resources goal is needed to provide guidance to forest resources decision-makers.

RECOMMENDATION #1 Government to clearly and officially identify the Provincial forest resources goal.

² Communities in this paper include Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

³ Provincial Timber Management Goals, Objectives and Targets, MFLNRORD, June 10, 2017

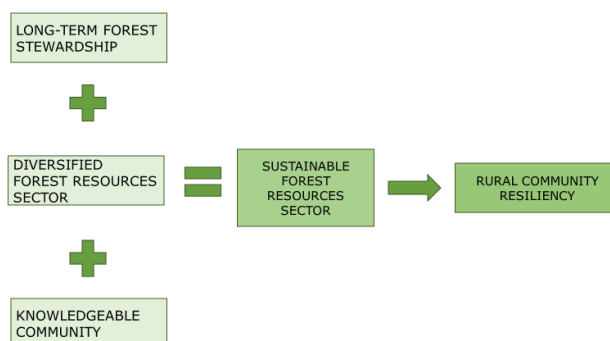
2) Forest Renewal Infrastructure Framework

The content of the suggested strategic framework is based on previously identified priority issues and the basis for moving toward both sustainable long-term forest stewardship and a wood manufacturing sector that contribute to community resiliency. The assumption is that a clear and focused strategy adopted by Government, the bureaucracy, industry, First Nations and non-Aboriginal communities will allow the Government, forest sector and communities to move toward community resiliency and deliver on the Government goals and Provincial visions.

Historically, Government has used a broad public/stakeholder consultation model, with limited success, to provide guidance in making changes to the forest sector regulations and policies or dealing with challenges. It is also understood that some people are suggesting a total make-over of the BC forest sector and forest management. This major change is not supported in this proposed forest Revitalization/Renewal vision due to the hardships on communities and the industry from the perspective of cost and economic and social impacts. Also, it is not necessary.

The proposed approach is to modify the existing forest sector and forest management to realize the potential of the major benefits the BC forest asset provides in the current and foreseeable future. However, this will have to involve significant change in the system, not just tweaking. It will require using both a process model that has a greater chance of success than those used in the last four (4) decades and a strategic focus that considers the current challenges confronted by Government and the industry. This requires direct involvement of knowledgeable, innovative and collaboratively independent specialists to find solutions to policy and business issues and barriers.

The forest sector has a major influence on building resiliency in 140 BC rural communities. There are three (3) factors shown below, when combined, lead to a sustainable local forest resources sector contributing to community resiliency.

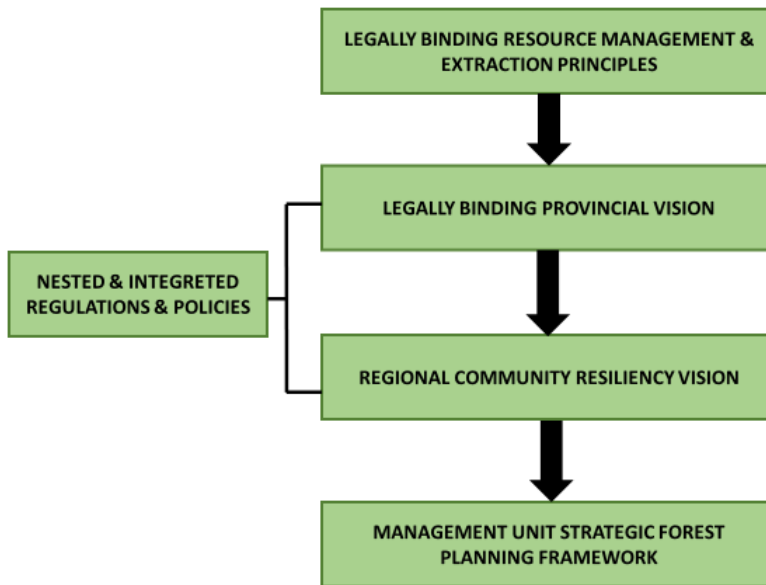


In developing a resilient community, balancing values is critical and needs to be considered throughout decision-making within both the process and implementation of the strategy.



RECOMMENDATION #2 Government to adopt strategic actions to provide support, including financial, to communities in implementing each of the three (3) components necessary to move toward community resiliency.

There are five (5) priority high-level infrastructure instruments requiring action to build on the existing BC regulatory and policy forest planning infrastructure⁴ to guide development of a renewed BC forest sector.



These components are major contributors to the sustainable long-term forest stewardship goal and short-term Government goals. They are not new. Concerned citizens and experts regarding the future of BC

⁴https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/forestry/silviculture/timbergoalsobjectives2017apr05_revised.pdf

forests during the 2011-2012 *Healthy Forests-Healthy Communities* dialogue with communities across BC⁵ identified them as priorities. Regardless of this advice, many of the issues continue to challenge Government, industry and communities. **It is time for action!**

a) Legally Binding Resource management and Extraction Principles

There needs to be a set of principles in the Forest Act that guide Ministerial and Government staff decision-making at the regulatory and operational levels. These principles must be legally binding if they are to be front and centre in decision-making. Once this is created, the forest manager would be expected to use them as a guide in their decision-making and they will become an evaluation tool for forest plan and activity reviews/audits. It will also provide clarity to communities regarding the strategic direction of Government and contribute to the Government short-term goals 1-4.

RECOMMENDATION #3 Government to create and adopt legally binding resource management and extraction principles in the Forest Act to guide forest resources management decision-making.

b) Legally Binding Provincial Vision Statements

The lack of formal Provincial vision statements regarding the sustainable management of BC forests and the desired wood manufacturing sector have created uncertainty and challenged decision-making. The Ministry vision for sustainable management of BC forests⁶ (reproduced below) could be used to guide decision-making, provided it is legally binding or some form of official policy that forces decision-makers to demonstrate actions that are consistent with the statements.

⁵ <http://bcforestconversation.com/restoring-bcs-forest-legacy/>

⁶ https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/forestry/silviculture/timbergoalsobjectives2017apr05_revised.pdf

“The Ministry’s vision for the sustainable management of B.C.’s provincial forest includes:

- ***Managing forests to meet present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs;***
- ***Providing stewardship of forests based on an ethic of respect for the land;***
- ***Maintaining and restoring proper ecosystem function and promoting ecological resilience for influences such as climate change;***
- ***Balancing economic, social, spiritual, ecological and recreational values of forests to meet the needs of people and communities, including First Nations; and***
- ***Conserving biological diversity, soil, water, fish, wildlife, scenic diversity, and other forest resources.”***

Changes to the Forest and Range Practices Act will be necessary to adequately move toward Government’s forest sustainable management vision.

The following proposed wood manufacturing vision is based on Government’s publicized goals and previously identified community resiliency objectives. This, or something similar, should be adopted to guide decision-making

A wood manufacturing sector that is:

- ***Globally competitive, sustainable and innovative.***
- ***Committed to building resilient communities.***
- ***Operating within a regulatory infrastructure that:***
 - ***Creates certainty, supports investment, supports sustainability, and has efficient and effective administrative processes, and***
 - ***Encourages companies to produce products that move up the economic value ladder from commodity products.***
- ***Diversified at the regional level in both size and product manufacturing businesses that fully utilize the available fibre supply in producing commodity, secondary wood, bioenergy, and biorefinery products.***
- ***Focused on niche markets that capitalize on the types of fibre in BC.***
- ***Operating within a tenure system that supports diversified and competitive regional wood manufacturing businesses.***

RECOMMENDATION #4 Government to clearly and officially identify the Provincial visions for long-term forest management and wood manufacturing.

c) Regional Community Resiliency Vision

Most of the conflict regarding local forest management is due to the lack of Regional community strategic vision statements for the local forests and wood manufacturing sector consistent with the Provincial visions.

These vision statements are critical to: 1) clarify the community desires, 2) provide guidance to the industry and advocates for the local forest, 3) move forward with community economic development, and 4) build public confidence and social license. These are fundamental to achieving the four (4) Government goals and long-term forest and wood manufacturing sustainability. However, they must be strategic in nature and not include tactical or operational detail.

As forest dependent communities struggle with an uncertain future and tough economic times, it requires deployment of the limited available resources in an efficient and effective manner. This is best achieved through a strategic approach to the issue, beginning with identifying or confirming a community resiliency vision and goals based on the natural resources in the region and sustainable markets that would justify their viability. Conceptual options and emphases for communities to consider are depicted in the adjacent graphic below.



Not all businesses are expected in each region or community.⁷

⁷ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/Moving-toward-community-resiliency-specific-actions.pdf>.

In moving toward community diversification and subsequently community resiliency, balancing values is critical as noted above. This must be considered throughout decision-making within the process and implementation of the strategy.

RECOMMENDATION #5 Government to provide financial and guidance support to communities in identifying strategic actions to move toward economic diversification and community resiliency.

d) Nested and Integrated Regulations and Policies

BC has a history of adding more pieces to a complicated forest regulatory structure rather than considering whether the current framework meets the needs of today. A couple of examples of this are a description of the forest management requirements of foresters⁸ and a list of over Provincial (40), Federal (9) and regulatory and social license documents (7) prepared by the Council of Forest Industries.⁹ These are represented in the following graphics.



⁸ Ken Zielke and Bryce Bancroft, Symmetry Consulting Group, <http://wwb.symmetry.ca>

⁹ *Smart Future: A Path Forward for B.C.'s Forest Products Industry*, COFI, September 2019



FORESTRY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA IS HIGHLY REGULATED

Our industry is governed by many legislative statutes, policies, licensing requirements, permitting processes, and oversight bodies.

PROVINCIAL

- Annual Rent Regulation
- Carbon Tax Act
- Contaminated Sites Regulation
- Cut Control Regulation
- Cutting permits
- Employer Health Tax Act
- Environmental Assessment Act
- Environmental Management Act
- Forest Act
- Forest and Range Practices Act
- Forest Practices Board
- Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act
- Forest Stand Management Fund Act
- Foresters Act
- Forestry
- Revitalization Act
- Forestry Services Providers Protection Act
- Great Bear Rainforest (Forest Management) Act
- Heritage Protection Act
- Industrial Roads Act
- Integrated Pest Management Act
- Logging Tax Act
- Manufactured Forest Products Regulation
- Ministerial approval of tenure transfers, tree farm licences, and other changes
- Ministry of Forests and Range Act
- Motor Vehicle Act
- Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation
- Professional Governance Act
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulation
- Private Managed Forest Land Act
- Pulp Mill and Pulp and Paper Mill Liquid Effluent Control Regulation

- Riparian Areas Protection Act
- Road permits
- Spill Reporting Regulation
- Timber Harvesting Agreements (Forest Tenures)
- Timber Harvesting Contract and Subcontract Regulation
- Timber Marking and Transportation Regulation
- Water Sustainability Act
- Wildfire Act
- Wildlife Act
- Workers Compensation Act
- And local government policies, requirements and other associated regulations and more...

FEDERAL

- Canadian Environmental Assessment Act
- Canadian Environmental Protection Act
- Fertilizers Act
- Fisheries Act
- Forestry Act
- Migratory Birds Convention Act
- Post Control Products Act
- Plant Protection Act
- Species at Risk Act
- and more...

VOLUNTARY

- Third Party Certification
- Biological Diversity Research
- Partnerships
- Wildlife Enhancement
- Public Education
- Ongoing Consultation
- Community Investment
- and more...

This will require rationalizing how the objectives can be achieved through coordination, collaboration and applying economic efficiencies. Delivery of the Government's Forest Revitalization/Renewal Initiative goals have the potential to add to the challenges of the forest sector and communities and impacting further on the globally competitiveness of industry. However, the Initiative also provides an opportunity to achieve the Government goals and move toward sustainability in long-term forest stewardship and wood manufacturing in a less complicated and costly infrastructure. It is recognized this would be a lengthy process but will generate long-term benefits to the Province and forest sector. A review and modifications of the current structure in a wholistic way relative what is needed in the 2020's and beyond will achieve both objectives.

RECOMMENDATION #6 Government to initiate, in collaboration with the forest industry, communities and First Nations a review of the legislative, regulatory and policy instruments associated with the forest sector with the objective of integrating and updating them to meet the Provincial visions for long-term forest stewardship, wood manufacturing and community resiliency.

e) Management Unit Strategic Forest Planning Framework

The required Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) produced by the forest manager to show the tactical level of planning previously came under criticism by the Forest Practices Board.¹⁰ Although adjustments have been made, a spatially and temporally explicit landscape unit management plan to replace the FSP or be the FSP would address many of the community concerns and contribute to restoring public confidence and improving the social license. This would also be a fundamental document to demonstrate movement toward the regional community vision.

A description of the concept of developing a spatially and temporally explicit Strategic Plan has been proposed.¹¹ The framework is outlined graphically below.



Many of the components in the Framework are either being used in some BC locations or have been proposed over the years. This approach is not new. It was used in the Lignum Ltd Innovative Forestry Practices Agreement 1994-2004¹² and currently in the Integrated Stewardship Strategy pilot projects (ISS).¹³ The technology has been available through BC consultants for over 20 years.

¹⁰ <https://www.bcfpb.ca/reports-publications/reports/forest-stewardship-plans-are-they-meeting-expectations/>

¹¹ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/SPATIALLY-AND-TEMPORALLY-EXPLICIT-STRATEGIC-PLANNING-FRAMEWORK.pdf>

¹² https://forestnet.com/LSJissues/Oct_00/forest_management.htm

¹³ <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/managing-our-forest-resources/silviculture/silviculture-strategy-areas>

RECOMMENDATION #7 Government, according to policy, require forest tenure holders to provide justification of their management by providing spatially and temporally explicit strategic level plans in a manner that delivers the intent of the proposed management unit strategic planning framework.

STRATEGIC REGULATION AND POLICY ACTIONS

The actions required to achieve Government's four (4) priority goals in Revitalizing/Renewal of the forest sector include regulation and policy strategic actions. The following outlines the priorities and brief descriptions of the rationale and suggested implementation of these priority actions.

1) LEADERSHIP

It is recognized much of the current regulations and policies reflect the proposed future visions for forest management and wood manufacturing. In addition, there may be other actions Government should be taking within this framework to move toward the objectives of long-term forest stewardship, a sustainable wood manufacturing sector and community resiliency.

The focus of this paper is on those priorities that are essential to moving forward to achieve the stated Government goals and a new forest sector. This will require a commitment by the key parties (i.e., Government, the bureaucracy, industry and communities) to cooperation, collaboration, innovation and be openness to recommended changes to the current models and moving away from the status quo when required.

RECOMMENDATION #8 Government to provide the leadership by encouraging, not with words but through actions, cooperation, collaboration, innovation and challenging of the current system by the key parties.

2) COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

In conversations with BC rural community residents interested in the future of BC forests, they have identified the need to build forestry related knowledge. This is an essential factor in both influencing forest lands decisions and generating a forest culture within communities. They have asked for more information on forests, forest management, land use and the forest sector. This is critical in achieving both an informed and engaged public and the Government goal of restoring public confidence and improving the social license.

RECOMMENDATION #9 Government to initiate a forest knowledge extension initiative to develop and maintain a community forest culture with an emphasis on rural communities.

a) Community Engagement

Communities have asked for greater influence in the management of their local forests.¹⁴ However, to be effective and constructive this must be focused at the strategic level. Achieving this involvement will contribute to delivering the Government goals of restoring public confidence and improving the social contract as well as contributing to the long-term forest stewardship of their local forests.

This can be facilitated by creating strategic regional forest and wood manufacturing sector visions.¹⁵ Several BC regions have such statements.¹⁶ Most communities are lacking funding and process guidance to ensure it is consistent with Provincial visions. However, the lack of a clear Provincial vision to provide the guidance in the development of community visions is a major problem. Failure to remove this limitation has a high potential of continued conflict and loss of the benefits of a Provincial vision (see Recommendation # 4).

The vision setting process should include multi-stakeholder and First Nations consultation managed by the Municipal Regional District in collaboration with the communities and First Nations within their boundaries. A guidance discussion on this for communities has been developed.¹⁷ To be an asset, the development of the vision requires flexibility to allow communities not only to capitalize on the forest values in their local forests but also their desires.

RECOMMENDATION #10 Government to initiate a program to support, financially and through guidance, regional rural communities to develop long-term forest stewardship and wood manufacturing visions.

b) Community Diversification

It has been common over the last three (3) decades for Governments to promote the increase in value-added manufacturing. The current Government has also done this through the four (4)

¹⁴https://www.ubcm.ca/assets/Resolutions~and~Policy/Policy/Community~Economic~Development/Forest_Policy_Decision_Making-Round_Table_Discussion_Summary-2016-11.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/community-influence/>

¹⁶ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/community-influence/>

¹⁷ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/Community-influence-local-forest-decision-making-info.pdf>

priority goals. Although Government can and should provide support, the primary responsibility for encouraging a diversified regional wood manufacturing sector resides with the communities and the manufacturing sector.¹⁸

The recent Bill 22 – Forest Amendment Act-2019 is intended to assist in creating a more diversified regional wood manufacturing sector. However, this has added to the uncertainty and stress within the forest sector and communities. Changes to Bill 22 are required.¹⁹

RECOMMENDATION #11 Government to modify and clarify existing legislation, regulation and policies to encourage investment in secondary wood manufacturing.

The regional forest vision is a cornerstone to determine the amount and type of wood fibre that would be available to investors. Regional communities should be encouraged to develop, in consultation with the manufacturing sector, a strategy to move efficiently and effectively toward delivery of the wood manufacturing vision. This requires identifying the issues and barriers to achieving the vision and then developing a Strategic Action Plan to remove these impediments. **This is not a multi-stakeholder process!** The multi-stakeholder process is associated with the development of the regional vision. However, decision-makers are reminded that markets and investment will be the ultimate arbitrator in developing the composition of the new wood manufacturing sector, not Government or communities. Transitioning to a new BC wood manufacturing sector will not be easy, quick or without its challenges!²⁰

RECOMMENDATION #12 Government to identify the barriers in achieving the new manufacturing sector and create small working groups consisting of knowledgeable, innovative and collaboratively independent specialists to identify solutions to overcoming the barriers.

¹⁸ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/new-wood-manufacturing-sector/>

¹⁹ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/bill-22-creates-uncertainty/>

²⁰ https://www.bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/Building-a-diversified-mfg-sector-challenges_1.pdf

The future of the BC wood products sector is in the creation of regional clusters where the available fibre is fully utilized and directed to the highest value products. This involves building community diversification through clusters.²¹ The cluster model has been proven in many situations within the forest sector and in other sectors across Canada and around the world. A working definition of a regional cluster is “wood manufacturing facilities within two (2) hours drive of one another” to facilitate good communications and working relationships. Clusters will provide the best opportunity to achieve the Government goals of: 1) improving harvest performance to ensure more fibre is available to domestic mills, 2) fostering stronger Business to Business relationships and 3) rebuilding solid wood secondary industries.

An industry cluster is a group of firms and institutions located in close proximity whose businesses are interlinked through value and supply chains, labor, and use of similar inputs, technology, and complementary products. Ref: *The status of and opportunities for business clustering within the forest products sector in the US, US Endowment of Forestry and Communities, 2009, 27p.*

RECOMMENDATION #13 Government to adopt policies and assistance programs that encourage the creation of regional wood manufacturing clusters consistent with the nature of the wood supply.

3) LONG-TERM FOREST STEWARDSHIP

BC has a sound basis for long-term forest stewardship as reflected in the large percentage of managed lands under third party certification.²² However, there are areas where we need to improve, especially related to contributing to community resiliency and maintaining and capitalizing on the forest asset. The following are priority areas for action.

a) Land Use Planning

BC was the international leader in forest land use planning in the 1990s. Land Use Plans were developed involving multi-stakeholder, interest-based negotiations and ultimately covered over 90% of the BC Crown land base. This provided the foundation for forest resources management and led to increased consideration for non-timber forest resources. However, the level of Government interest in maintaining and updating the plans dropped dramatically in 2001. The current Government has identified updating land use plans through Government to Government negotiations with First Nations on a site by site basis as a priority. This is a positive decision.

²¹ <http://bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/Building-through-clusters-1.pdf>

²² <https://www.naturallywood.com/resources/forest-certification-bc>

However, care is needed to include the views of non-Aboriginal communities and industry when developing these plans to avoid a repeat of the recent negative situation arising from the caribou habitat plan produced by two First Nations and the Federal and Provincial Governments. One option is for Government to support and encourage Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities to work collaboratively and cooperatively in developing their collaborative regional land use plan.

Land use plans are a cornerstone for developing a community vision and community diversification and a long-term forest management plan. Consequently, the updating of land use plans must become a top priority to moving toward community resiliency. Discussions and potential process solutions have been outlined for consideration.^{23, 24}

RECOMMENDATION #14 Government to expedite the land use planning update process to provide the basis for moving toward community resiliency.

b) Monitoring and Adaptive Management

Forest managers operate in an imperfect environment. Consequently, the principles of monitoring and adaptive management are essential, if assurances regarding moving toward long-term forest management are to be provided. This needs to be a fundamental principle of evaluating progress.

Government has initiated changes to *Professional Reliance* which is one of the three components necessary to build public confidence as outlined in the recommended integrated nested system approach.²⁵ Providing the basis for restoring public confidence and improving the social contract is critical. Monitoring and adaptive management is a major contributor to achieving this goal.

RECOMMENDATION #15 Government to adopt a nested-integrated approach to the monitoring of forest management practices.

The level of compliance and enforcement by MFLNRORD staffing continues to come under question by both the Forest Practices Board (FPB)²⁶ and the BC Ombudsman.²⁷ If long-term forest management is to be demonstrated and community support provided through granting the social

²³ <http://bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/Land-use-planning-need-for-updating.pdf>

²⁴ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/time-for-bc-to-renew-its-land-use-leadership/>

²⁵ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/Building-Public-Confidence-A-nested-approach.pdf>

²⁶ <https://tinyurl.com/ycffjqsc>

²⁷ <https://tinyurl.com/y7dunjap>

license, sufficient compliance and enforcement staff will be required to monitor forest practices. This is essential to restoring public confidence and improving the social contract.

RECOMMENDATION #16 Government to ensure sufficient Ministry staff and resources are available to adequately monitor forest practices and overcome the deficiencies noted by the FPB and the BC Ombudsman.

c) Forest Resources Inventory

The forest inventory is the foundation for many forest resources management decisions. It is used by at least eight (8) Ministries, two (2) Crown Corporations, the forest industry, First Nations and others in their land-based resource decision-making. An inadequate forest inventory on which these decisions are based has a high potential for making poor decisions which can result in significant costs to the Provincial economy and negative impacts to achieving the vision of long-term forest management and sustainable wood manufacturing sector investments. The recent Ministry (MFLNRORD) Blue Ribbon Forest Inventory Review Panel recommendations identified the need for a significant and sustainable increase in funding over the long-term (10 years) to adequately provide the necessary data and information.²⁸ The forest inventory is fundamental in developing Provincial and community visions for long-term forest stewardship, community resiliency and achieving the Government's priority goals.

RECOMMENDATION #17 Government to: a) evaluate the required funding for providing a forest resources inventory that is necessary to achieve well-managed forests and b) implement a strategic action plan to provide sustainability of the funding for the inventories over a 10-year period.

d) Re-invigorating the BC Forest Resources Research Sector

Government and the forest industry response to the forest sector changes and economic conditions over the last 15 years has resulted in a major reduction in delivering research for long-term forest management of BC forests. A robust forest research program to provide the knowledge and innovation needed to manage the future BC forest asset is essential. A new collaborative and cooperative research model and infrastructure has been outlined.^{29, 30}

²⁸ https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/farming-natural-resources-and-industry/forestry/stewardship/forest-analysis-inventory/panel_summary_report_final.pdf

²⁹ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/Need-for-a-new-research-model.pdf>

³⁰ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/A-new-forest-research-infrastructure-model-1.pdf>

RECOMMENDATION #18 Government to engage with other research institutions to build a cooperative and collaborative model for forest related research in BC to meet the needs of the current and future BC forest asset.

e) Old Growth Conservation

Conservation of old growth forests have been recognized for years by forest professionals and policy decision-makers for their value to the environmental, economic, social and cultural contributions provided by the BC forest asset. The issue of old growth conservation is not new. The challenge is how to include this value into the mainstream, long-term forest stewardship of BC forests asset.

Old growth conservation strategies and policies cannot be developed in isolation of a suitable forest regulatory and planning infrastructure framework. As described above, BC has a history of responding to issues by just adding a piece to the existing infrastructure without knowing how it fits overall in an efficient and effective manner. A model consistent with the recommendations in this paper has been proposed in a submission to the *Old Growth Strategic Review*.³¹ Changes to the Forest and Range Practices Act may be necessary to deliver on this approach. Integrating old growth conservation as a value to be addressed by forest planners will contribute to the Government goal of restoring public confidence and improving the social contract.

RECOMMENDATION #19 Government to adopt the integration of old growth values as part of the new forest sector vision proposed.

³¹ <https://www.bcforestconversation.com/wp-content/uploads/Old-growth-conservation.pdf>