



EXPERT WORKSHOP-MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

JUNE 13TH, 2012 – SELKIRK COLLEGE

SUMMARY REPORT

The following is a summary of the comments made during the HFHC Expert meeting. Participants were given the questions in advance of the meeting, but the discussions were often wide ranging.

Questions to be covered during this meeting included:

- 1. What monitoring and assessment processes are in place for local forest lands?**
- 2. Are these adequate? How can they be improved?**
- 3. How might communities be involved in monitoring?**
- 4. What conditions for success are necessary to achieve this objective?**
- 5. What barriers currently prevent achieving this objective?**
- 6. What actions can we take to help achieve this objective?**
- 7. What strategies do we recommend?**

1.

- ▶ There seems to be a complex web of monitoring of lands throughout the province and the general public doesn't have a clue who is responsible for what. There appears to be an incredible amount of monitoring that is not necessarily effective.
- ▶ Results and strategies – are suppose to reflect public values and as these values change, we need to frequently ask the question of what is relevant monitoring and assessment
- ▶ What was relevant years ago, isn't necessarily relevant today
- ▶ There appears to be two scales of assessment and monitoring
- ▶ Licensees have much more discretionary power in what is and isn't monitored
- ▶ Private lands are monitored by council – public wants a more comprehensive report from the private sector
- ▶ Government can't seem to get a reflection of what needs monitoring – seem to have people with their own objectives

2. Are these adequate? How can they be improved?

- ▶ No, they are not adequate
- ▶ Monitoring and assessment is completely fragmented – but really should be contingent on a separate organization and with their own mandate
- ▶ Different types of monitoring out there – but are they talking to each other? Communication is key.
- ▶ Landscape level ties everything together – basing decisions on data that is not adequate is unacceptable
- ▶ Big issues – inventories are not updated or necessarily accurate
- ▶ Interesting exchange at the provincial level where there is the argument that at the landscape level we are able to legislate and make a call but the inventory was so highly variable that no one was able to assign any level of confidence at any level. Interesting the back and forth with lay people; if you have no confidence how can you proceed? How can you project things to a large scale?
- ▶ Compliance and enforcement is a complaint driven, after the fact organization.
- ▶ Foresters need to make changes and the public want to keep it the way it is. How can things be improved? Government should be warning the public that, “It is going to Change”. Keep the public informed. Issues have to be looked at in terms of showing the public what forest management looks like – it looks ugly at the beginning but it does come back. Websites don’t have the same effect as boots on the ground. Tell the story more realistically in terms of change and areas of the forest that we are going to manage. Park system – need to think out of the box. Prepare people for these changes. EDUCATION: 50% paper, 50% field trip.
- ▶ Adequate – comfortable with the accuracy of the program. Permanent inventories are techniques that are over 100 years old. Permanent inventories are an improvement. The future doesn’t need to be measured every ten years. Measure over a longer range. Some use of remote sensing to help out with inventory.
- ▶ Budgets are marginal – amount of dollars has declined.
- ▶ If you need to improve accuracy you need government to get back in control. Value of government was inventory and research – get it back. Get government to do long term research more and leave the short term research to the universities.
- ▶ Information sharing part is poor. Government needs to take a lead inventory role. This is the first step. Walking fifty meters can make a huge difference. Can’t expect government to make a true inventory analysis sitting in Victoria. Need to have your feet on the ground.
- ▶ On the woodlot and community forest level, monitoring and assessment might be working, but these tenures need market availability to get in. Need to be able to change what they are marketing.
- ▶ We are faced with limited resources and this is a reflection of the public values. A good inventory would tell us what we have across this province.

3. How might communities be involved in monitoring?

- ▶ Is there some data out there that communities want to be involved or do they want to just be better informed on what is happening? How much of the broader community wants to be involved?
- ▶ There is no mechanism for the community to be involved. Citizens need to go somewhere to see what activities are happening in their own community.
- ▶ People who are comfortable don't come out.
- ▶ Where does the community get information? How do you become involved in forest management? Some people feel it is in an adversarial way to include the public.
- ▶ Is there any provincial way to involve community? Stewardship plans are how the community can become informed. Not mandatory for licensee to inform the public.
- ▶ Each community has interest groups – on private land it is the motorized people that ask questions compared to people in other communities.
- ▶ Schools in this province do a poor job of teaching forest history. Involve the schools – should be an important part of the curriculum.
- ▶ Do open houses
- ▶ The public is lacking confidence.... if we had an excellent inventory people might feel they have some input.
- ▶ Do we need a campaign through our profession?– value in trying to get more media savvy – show people the “plan”. Bring the public in and show them all the issues. Water might be an issue that will bring into focus how we are doing. Concentrate effort on how we're going to manage the water. Show people that you can build roads in watersheds without damaging the resource. Use water as an example in forest management.
- ▶ When community forests are young it is an opportunity to get community involvement.
- ▶ Community forests may be a good thing – makes citizens feel like they have control over local forests.
- ▶ If the community is involved, inventory definitely needs to be improved.

4. What conditions for success are necessary to achieve this objective?

- ▶ Government has given up a lot of their responsibility and this needs to be brought back into more of a balance.
- ▶ One theme – information sharing. What is it that people feel ?– they worried about the unknown. First step of monitoring may be information sharing.
- ▶ Education – what is involved, how much work goes into a plan.
- ▶ INFORMATION and EDUCATION
- ▶ Government needs to be involved – this is the key to having public input
- ▶ Appraisal system – negative forest management. Put some of the money into public education and you will get more involvement. Money back into the community i.e. funding going back into landbase investment in forestry.

- ▶ Agency in the middle is the ABCFP. More monitoring, compliance and higher level of input – a tiny organization for the mandate they have been given.

5. What barriers currently prevent achieving this objective?

- Appraisal system
- Education of public
- Lack of government oversight
- The big macro issue is inventory – can't manage if we don't know what is out there

Discussions from points above:

- ▶ What do they want? How can you provide it? Need to ask the public.
- ▶ Industry culture – short term driven
- ▶ No incentive to have involvement by communities – it is a cost! No advantage. Cost that somebody else doesn't have.
- ▶ Need to talk to other industries. Roads with mining and forestry.
- ▶ What is happening on the landscape involves many industries.
- ▶ Have a silo approach – landbase is used for more than growing trees. I.e: recreation, Mining, first nations issues, etc. Landscape isn't just forestry – get together with the other parties involved.
- ▶ Can't isolate forest management.
- ▶ Question about control and defining what community is. Objectives are not always the same for the local area vs the provincial level.
- ▶ Need to revisit plans that the old zoning put on the landscape. Is this still meeting community needs?
- ▶ MFLNRO is a move in the right direction.
- ▶ We must look at the cumulative effects on the landscape.
- ▶ Disconnect in looking at the landscape and looking at the forest in the landscape.

6. & 7. What actions can we take to help achieve this objective?

What strategies do we recommend?

- ▶ Doing a proper inventory.
- ▶ Direct money towards inventory – make it beyond the mountain pine beetle.
- ▶ Should inventory branch be its own branch with an auditing requirement?
- ▶ Issue around a separate agency removed from budget and budget issues. Separate to forest practices board.
- ▶ Forest practices board and attorney general could be under one of the two agencies.

In summary:

- Better inventory
 - Independent watchdog agency
 - Data warehouse where the public could access information
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- ▶ Online mapping – doing something or having an inventory that a separate agency distributes
 - ▶ Forestry has been put on a backburner – this whole process is to bring it back into the public’s eye so we can have good conversations.
 - ▶ Anything to increase the profile to public input. The time is here to put this back into the public awareness. People are interested but they never hear anything but the negative – terrible perception.
 - ▶ Needs to be an exercise of defining the indicators.
 - ▶ Attorney General tends to get the public’s attention.
 - ▶ Is it government’s role to determine what can be said about where the forestry industry is going?
 - ▶ A Royal Commission could subpoena people to the discussion. We need one because information comes out without fear of retribution. Public would be engaged. Public would come forward. Forestry reputation might come back with public trust.
 - ▶ Raise the profile in the community.
 - ▶ ABCFP must do a better job
 - ▶ How do we get people interested in forestry – goes back to public perception – people don’t know what the job is – disconnect to understanding the process – management team that makes informed decisions – “No clear cut logging” signs still appear because of the public perception – forest management is more than cutting down trees to make money (always fighting that perception).
 - ▶ Canadian Forest Service had a function to report out on forest health. Agency should have a function of reporting on the forest health and measuring them against indicators
 - ▶ Neither government nor ABCFP promote the work we have done to this point. Future generations are going to inherit good forests.
 - ▶ Rough stuff going on as well – there is a reality that forestry in BC isn’t all good.

- ▶ There is a good forestry being practiced out there – not getting credit for it.
- ▶ Victoria and the local level are different and we have to base most information the Victoria’s interpretation; which is not always accurate.
- ▶ Some methodologies need to be customized for the Kootenays – we are different from other areas
- ▶ Localized inventory not Victoria based
- ▶ If you can’t measure it how can you manage it (this statement comes from Interior Health)
- ▶ If you can’t measure your inventory successfully how can you make good management decisions?
- ▶ Can’t measure things at the level to make good decisions because we don’t know what our inventory is
- ▶ Measured and monitored makes for good improvements
- ▶ What indicators to look at? – get people talking about this
- ▶ We need a place to have a conversation
- ▶ We always react and then end up chasing. Need feedback in a timely fashion that reports to government but also the community – community driven.
- ▶ People at the local level have the expertise with inventory and the government needs to listen to it
- ▶ Public consultation with the right information

Other ideas/recommendations:

- Applied research and monitoring
- Auditing or independent watchdog
- Define indicators – what are we measuring – what is important
- Media campaign and education to the public – get the word out – ride the waves
- Royal commission – expensive but we need this – get a dialogue happening
- Reporting out – need the education so you can visualize it
- Focus on simpler indicators that public can understand
- Species at risk – report on the growing or diminishing of species – depends on other indicators
- Define what you are measuring
- Geocaching is huge – forestry geocaching – give people locations to have a look - showcase successes – turn the negative into positive. This would have to come from government – look at other social media for thoughts and ideas
- Connect with public in a positive way