

MID-VANCOUVER ISLAND COMMUNITY DIALOGUE SESSION

Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo Campus

September 29, 2011

(6:00 pm - 9:00 pm)

REPORT

DIALOGUE SESSION FORMAT

The Dialogue Session included:

- An introduction to the *Healthy Forest-Healthy Communities: A conversation on BC forests* initiative
- A World Café discussion format with five tables, where each table focused on a specific question in three rounds of conversations, each lasting approximately 20 minutes. At the end of each round, participants elected to stay at the table to continue the conversation, or move to another table to join the conversation on another question. At the beginning of rounds 2 and 3, the table host welcomed any new participants and summarized the highlights of the previous conversation(s), then took notes as the conversation continued. Five (5) questions were considered:
 - 1) *What kinds of goods and services do our communities want/need from local forests for our social, cultural, and economic wellbeing? [How would you rank these goods or services in importance?]*
 - 2) *What is the role of communities in ensuring the health and defining the goods and services from mid-Vancouver Island forests? [How could communities effectively participate in ensuring that mid-Vancouver Island forests are managed sustainably to meet their needs?] [What do communities need to participate effectively?]*
 - 3) *What do we perceive as major issues in the management and use of mid-Vancouver Island forests? [What is needed to address these issues?] [Which of these actions is most important? Most urgent?]*
 - 4) *How would you modify the draft vision for BC forests to apply to mid-Vancouver Island?*
 - 5) *How can we keep this conversation going in our communities? Who do we need to take these messages to, and how?*
- Comments from the participants were recorded by the conversation hosts at each table.

DIALOGUE SESSION FINDINGS

Highlights of the conversations related to question 2 are summarized in Table 1. Highlights related to questions 1, 3, and 4 are summarized under Key Messages, Issues, and Actions, and highlights of the conversation related to question 5 are summarized under Next Steps.

Table 1 Conversation highlights

What is the role of communities in ensuring the health and defining the goods and services from mid-Vancouver Island forests?		
<u>Legislative and Decision Making:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire “blocks” through legislation to stop degradation • Need values of all to be expressed on private forestry lands • Public should have more structured authority • Currently, communities have no active role • Communities feel ignored • Keep forest lands in equitable balance • Decision making is centralized elsewhere (in Victoria) 		<u>Community Action:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility • To be mindful of our consumerism, what we purchase and where those products are from • Continuous engagement of the community • Community involvement and responsibility • Work with other communities • Relate local situation to global issues • Interpreting global goals to local circumstance
How can communities get involved?		
<u>Communication:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create strong sustainability planning • Address all values - Prioritize values • Role depends on values... health vs goods/services speak to very different values • Solution orientated • Create forum for open, constructive dialogue • Get sectors to talk • More coordinated effort • Approach as a collective of communities • Get “friendly” with forest sector 	<u>Research:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform yourself • Ecosystem mapping • Define ecological thresholds to manage risk associated with industrial forestry • Determine values of community • Identify needs and communicate with land owners to move forward • Create incentives for private land owners • NAPTEP (tax breaks for environmental land protection) • Define what our local wood is good for • Learn what primary forests are being used for • Determine how decisions are made by the decision makers to find areas to focus on 	<u>Community Action/Education:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational role • Become aware! • Know what you buy - Support value added industry • Treat areas as social-ecological areas • Show importance of medicinal uses (value of intact forest) • Make more valuable standing than logged (show/inform of standing values) • Nutrient cycling • Change legislation

Table 1 Conversation highlights (cont'd)

What do communities need to participate effectively?	
<p><u>Community Action/Education:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops that explain what is going on • Funding: to educate schools and communities and to host dialogue • Process affordable for all to participate • More community participation/involvement • Media support and involvement • Better information and promotion • A connection to forests • Sustainability - Knowledge • Knowledgeable/experienced people 	<p><u>Communication/Decision Making/Research:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective voice • Government involvement in dialogue • Regular meeting of all sectors - All sectors on the same page • Universal definitions • Understand legislation (that protects) • Understand future plans of forestry • Balance between business and nature • Forum to be heard – all with an equal voice • Equality in decision making (similar to First Nation circle of equality)

KEY MESSAGES – issues and potential actions

The focus of the discussion was on private forest lands due to the dominance of this type of tenure in the mid-Vancouver Island region

- 1) HFHC draft vision application to mid-Vancouver Island forests
 - a) The statement is fine but lacks substance
 - b) Issues related to application of the vision statement
 - i) Current Government actions do not appear to support the vision
 - ii) More discussion is required to make the vision a reality
 - iii) Large amount of private forest land on Vancouver Island requires a modification to implementation compared to application on Crown land

- 2) Issues related to private land
 - a) Public concerned regarding impacts of forest management decisions on public resources (e.g., water, fish, wildlife, biodiversity, etc)
 - b) Government regulations and monitoring are insufficient to protect public interests
 - c) Public trust of private forest land owners is low
 - d) Lack of mechanisms for public input into forest management decisions
 - i) Possible action may be incentives to land owner for encouraging public input
 - ii) Land owner receives compensation for accommodating public interests
 - e) Urban-rural interface conflicts
 - f) Restricted land access limits public realization of local forest amenities near communities
 - g) Sale of private forest land for residential development after tax benefits have been provided over time

- h) Overcome the lack of public education regarding forestry and forest management, especially related to land ownership and related issues through:
 - i) Dispelling myths
 - ii) Increasing knowledge regarding forestry and forest management
 - iii) Communicating private land owner practices and state of the forest
- 3) Community wants/needs from local forests for local-regional social, cultural and economic well being
 - a) Desired goods and services included:
 - i) Access to forest lands for social and cultural amenities, such as:
 - (1) Recreation opportunities
 - (2) Aesthetics associated with landscapes
 - ii) Environmental protection, such as:
 - (1) Water quality
 - (2) Estuary resources
 - (3) Fish and wildlife habitat
 - (4) Threatened species habitat protection
 - (5) Conservation forests
 - (6) Forest health
 - (7) Wildfire protection
 - (8) Soil protection
 - (9) Invasive species
 - (10) Landscape level planning
 - b) Constraints to overcome in achieving community wants/needs, such as:
 - i) Recognition much of the mid-Vancouver Island forests are privately held
 - ii) Private forest land management is a business
 - iii) Private forest land owners do not feel fully responsible for the costs of protecting all community resources
 - c) Suggested opportunities to overcome constraints included:
 - i) Private land owners have an option for reimbursement for delivering community wants/needs, such as:
 - (1) Maintaining ecosystem services
 - (2) Creating conservation forest areas
 - (3) Recreation opportunities
 - (4) Road use
 - (5) Climate change amelioration
 - (6) Water quality
 - (7) Fish and wildlife habitat protection
 - (8) Estuary resources

- ii) Regulations related to private forest land management to include:
 - (1) Requirements related to broadly accepted “good stewardship” practices
 - (2) Responsibility of the land owner protecting the forest lands to deliver community wants/needs
 - (3) Demonstrated long-term strategies related to forest land resources

NEXT STEPS

The mid-Vancouver Island Community Dialogue Session attendees suggested to keep the HFHC conversation going, the right groups and individuals need to be involved. The right groups would include all major perspectives on this issue (government, industry, environmental groups, community groups, educators, etc.) and the right individuals would include people with the energy, contacts and communication skills to actively collaborate with other individuals and groups. It was identified that there needs to be better education of the issues, not just for the broader public but also for the specific groups involved. This will mean better communication links, especially between the major groups.

Potential communication tools included:

- Internet – websites, chats, blogs, social media
- Newspapers
- Billboards
- Welcome Wagon
- Community meetings
- Conventions
- Follow-up Community Dialogue Session

The *Healthy forests-Healthy communities: A conversation on BC forests* initiative welcomes additional input from concerned citizens in the mid-Vancouver Island region. These can be provided through the website e-mail info@bcforestconversation.com or through the facebook and twitter mechanisms accessed through the website <http://bcforestconversation.com>.

A final report will be prepared by January 2012 summarizing the input from the Community Dialogue Sessions held during 2011. All the information will be posted on the *Healthy Forests-Healthy Communities* initiative website and provided electronically to key decision-makers. The HFHC organizers, partners, communities and concerned citizens will be encouraged to let politicians know of their support for the views from the communities and individuals regarding the future management of BC forests and their expectation for action on the key messages.