

PORT ALBERNI COMMUNITY DIALOGUE SESSION

Tseshah First Nation Administrative Building

November 14, 2011

(7:00 pm - 9:00 pm)

REPORT

DIALOGUE SESSION FORMAT

The Dialogue Session included:

- A Traditional Welcome and Prayer from Tseshah First Nation Elder, Irma Robinson
- Introduction of the *Healthy forest-Healthy communities: A conversation on BC forests* Initiative
- Brief presentations from five (5) local community members involved in different aspects of the forest industry. The speakers and their sectors were:
 - Erin Badesso, Large Forest Industry Sector
 - Larry Spencer, Log Brokers and Markets Sector
 - Mike McKay, Manufacturing Sector
 - Keith Hunter, Non-Timber Forest Products Sector
 - Rob Hunter, Small Forest Industry, Community and First Nations Sector
- Discussions in each of four (4) table groups focused on three (3) questions:
 - What do you need from the Port Alberni forest to meet community needs?
 - Are you getting what you expect from the Port Alberni forest?
 - What do you think needs to change, if anything, for the forest to deliver on community needs?
- Comments from the participants were recorded by the conversation hosts at each table and summarized into key issues and potential actions.

Speaker Presentations:

The Speakers were asked to respond to each of the following questions:

- 1) Given that the demand on forested land and forest resources will most likely be different in the future, do you think that current forest policy and regulation will provide for sustainable use over the long term in the Alberni Valley?

- 2) Do the current industrial, economic and regulatory structures support development and sustainability for the Alberni Valley? What measures or actions do you think are needed to better reflect local needs within the existing framework of policies and regulations?
- 3) If we were to recommend changes to industrial, economic and regulatory structures, what approach should be used?
- 4) Should we use the “focused fixer” approach which would include actions within the existing industrial and economic model or should we take the approach of a “paradigm shifter” which would require a change in the industrial and economic models?

- **Erin Badesso, Large Forest Industry Sector**

- Sees three broad pillars supporting the industry:
 - 1) Safety: The Large Forest Industry Sector has made tremendous strides in safety. An older demographic is working in the industry so we need to attract young people to ensure a healthy community.
 - 2) Environmental: Policies have come through government while others are voluntary (eg. Forest Certification). Through certification, the sector is third- party audited and gives voice to a variety of interest areas.
 - 3) Productivity: A challenge to sustain a viable business when coastal BC has traditionally had one of the highest delivered wood costs in the world.
- Synergies within the existing infrastructure are important to the viability of the sector. We must encourage government policies that will enhance those synergies (eg. Labour, Forest Tenure, Stumpage).
- New product lines are required as the industry transitions from old growth to second growth harvest.
- Any recommended policy change needs to be tested against a Community Vision to ensure that unintended negative consequences are minimized.

- **Larry Spencer, Log Broker and Markets Sector**

- Sells logs from 20 First Nations’ tenures, BCTS, private woodlots, community forest and various other areas. Mandate is to get the highest value for logs for the owner.
- Sees too much red tape and bureaucracy on provincial Crown lands (e.g., government, “pine beetle manipulation” sets the market price for tenure wood for everyone else).
- Sees American protectionism interfering with current stumpage and royalty system.
- Need to modernize the current economic and regulatory structures or the industry will fail.
- Wants a competitive BC industry that can compete for logs on the world market.
- There are more diverse tenure holders than ever before. This needs to continue to use all the Allowable Annual Cut.

- Access to timber allows access to capital which leads to investment.
- Would like to see more diversity of tenure, less bureaucracy and red tape, less subsidizing from government to forest sector.
- **Mike MacKay, Manufacturing Sector**
 - Recent purchasing of raw logs by China drove the saw log and pulp log markets up and now the markets are going back down.
 - China is willing to pay a far higher price for logs than domestic prices in order to employ their people.
 - Lumber manufacturing is still taxed 15%, but not paper, pulp, or railroad ties. There is lots of competition with the US. Local red cedar and hemlock logs are shipped mainly to the US.
 - The labour force is aging and there is no incentive for young people to get into the forest industry.
 - In Port Alberni, the sawmill and pulp mill are still running. We are doing better than other communities.
 - We need to support our local manufacturing industries or we will continue to lose raw materials through log exporting.
- **Keith Hunter, Non-Timber Forest Products Sector**
 - The term “sustainable” needs to be understood within a generational context that includes all values of the forest. Conservation values need to be part of sustainability and forest management plans
 - Need to support entrepreneurship and small enterprises with knowledge transfer and mentoring.
 - Communication is key: information sharing protocols need to be implemented with access to relevant information in a timely manner. Full, prior informed consent is required in resource planning.
 - Fixer: we can do better than the existing system.
 - Paradigm: Ultimately there is a need for shared decision-making, co-management, equalization of values in decision-making and a shift towards community-based decision-making instead of corporate decision-making.
 - What do we leave for our children and grandchildren? Forest users include recreation and non-timber uses. The real question should be “What are the community’s needs, and how does industry help to meet those needs?”
 - Need to develop low-intensity monitoring for non-timber products (e.g., observational / anecdotal methodologies based on local practitioners’ knowledge).
 - Traditional Ecological Knowledge needs to be recognized as on par with western science (as described in the Nagoya Protocol).

- **Rob Hunter, Small Forest Industry, Community & First Nations Sector**

- Sustainability is not impossible: we can provide fibre, but sustainable forest management is a different matter.
- The question really is about resource use: What do we do with the resources we sustain? We are not talking about mills, rather talking about use at the forest management level. The current business structure does not support development. There has been no new development of the big industry sector in the Alberni Valley, but smaller tenures/forest managers have been diversifying. Capital outlay goes into little sawmills and small operators. We need to put money in to grow the industry.
- Smaller operators are able to make more from each cubic metre harvested.
- Small woodlot owners have great returns. Bigger industries cannot get close to those numbers. Local based decisions can be made by small holders – they know their neighbours, they keep money local – this is how you keep a community healthy.
- Recommend changes to current structures – will continue to make “smaller” a bigger priority. This fits well for First Nations.

KEY ISSUES AND POTENTIAL ACTIONS

Based on results from each discussion group the following Key Issues and Potential Actions were identified.

1) Role of Government

- a) Incentives: stumpage, taxes, best practices, green energy, NTFP cedar oil production.
- b) Marketing: sustainability sells – makes products more attractive.
- c) Policy: Invest in research, be creative with access management, less involvement in the business side, protect non-timber values.
- d) Tenure: security and consolidation: further erosion will make it worse for future investments into the industry.
- e) Inventory: a re-inventory is needed, better access to inventory data by private land owners so there is transparency, access to “proprietary info” gathered by private companies about their own lands, need a credible inventory to make key decisions.

2) Role of the Industry

- a) Invest in new technology, update current manufacturing infrastructure to meet today’s markets.
- b) More engagement with smaller tenure holders.
- c) Diversify product lines, generate an economy from carbon credits, more vision with products that we make from our forests.
- d) Maintain a better balance between economic and environmental and social values.

3) Role of Community

- a) More active in determining what is needed from the Port Alberni forest.
- b) More focus on water quality, cultural, recreation.
- c) Emphasis on training youth for forest sector jobs
- d) Promote the human resource needs in the local forest sector.

NEXT STEPS

The *Healthy forests-Healthy communities: A conversation on BC forests* initiative welcomes additional input from concerned citizens in the Port Alberni area. 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.