



ForestWise – Spring 2007
The E-Newsletter of the British Columbia Forests Society
www.forestssociety.com

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1. Introductory Remarks

Welcome to the second newsletter of the Forests Society. We intend to increase the frequency of ForestWise, possibly producing one every month, to allow for covering more issues and presenting more points of view. So watch for more of a good thing.

There are several new submissions that have been added to our 'Articles' section on the website: Mountain Pine Beetle community guide; Tree Farm Licence land removals; and Book Review - Up Coast. Let us know what you think of them.

Please help us network with everyone in British Columbia interested in forest stewardship by forwarding to them a copy of this newsletter, and directing them to our website for more information: www.forestssociety.com

Consider becoming a member of the Society. Annual memberships for individuals and families are \$10, and for groups or organizations are \$25. There is a mail-in membership form at the end of this newsletter.

Members will receive this newsletter quarterly via e-mail, and can participate in Society activities through their local branches, which are intended to be established in many communities throughout the province. Your local branch will take a direct interest in local forests, as well as working with provincial issues, to promote and monitor forest stewardship and build a sustainable future. You may wish to help to establish the first local branch of the Society in your area!

Letters, Ideas, Questions, Suggestions - contact ForestWise at: forestwise@shaw.ca

2. Society Business

We've been busy with several Board meetings in the first few months of 2007.

- **January 23**
- **February 20**
- **March 27**

Please refer to our website for full meeting minutes:

www.forestsociety.com/about.htm

Our meetings are open to all of our members. Please contact us if you would like to attend: forestwise@shaw.ca

3. Editorial Commentary

"Oops, what happened..."

Candid comments from Harry Drage, Society President.

I am hearing a few very basic questions from people and communities throughout BC. Weren't our forests supposed to be around for generations to come? Weren't our forests supposed to meet the needs of our local communities including stable employment and a healthy living environment?

Unfortunately, I don't see BC's realities as very rosy - our forest culture is weakening, our forest communities are in trouble, mills are closing, forests are in trouble, resource revenues have diminished, forestry schools enrolment is declining, confrontations among users are common, meaningful public dialogue is lacking, programs are insufficiently funded, and there is an absence of a clear vision or goals. What will the future look like unless we make some constructive changes?

I am concerned that in spite of the best efforts of many people in BC, we're just not doing as well as we should. So what do we need to do? Well, a few things include:

- Develop a clear intent and direction about what we want for our forests and our forest communities
- Involve people in meaningful ways with forests and forestry
- Decide how we will treat our wildlife, water, fish, soils, trees, air
- Measure how we are actually doing
- Change our principles and practices if the results aren't what we want

I think that BC currently needs a major and comprehensive review of forests and forestry. We may already be in danger of losing our traditional forest culture and all of the things that go with it. What's missing is a strong and clear provincial commitment that is necessary for us to achieve the results we are looking for.

The solutions will involve many people collaborating over time with an open-minded, inclusive approach; solutions that favour one forest sector over another will not produce the results we want. We deserve better. Our forests deserve better.

4. Featured Article(s)

This section of our newsletter will feature thought-provoking subjects and opinions, to aid with constructive debate about SFM in the province. If you wish to contribute or comment, please contact the editor of ForestWise at: forestwise@shaw.ca.

Reliance on Forest Professionals: An Elusive Goal by Andrew Mitchell

Almost 100 years ago, the Fulton Commission on BC's forests surveyed the state of forest management in North America and realized that the forests of British Columbia were remarkable, and deserved appropriate and special treatment. They were to be retained in public ownership, so that they could be better managed by an independent, professional Forest Service rather than private timber interests.

While the BC Forest Service did bring improvements in many elements of forest management, it did not become the independent forest management agency that was originally intended. After two World Wars and a major Depression in the first half of the twentieth century, BC was eager for economic development. To achieve this goal, forest corporations willing to establish manufacturing plants in BC communities were awarded rights to harvest timber from BC's public forests. Government and industry were jointly involved in a grand, centralized scheme of timber exploitation. This industrial model meant that forest professionals did not really manage local forests but instead fulfilled specialized roles in large industry or government organizations, as employees or consultants. Our professionals had little independence in this classic arrangement.

This type of industrial forest management appeared to work quite well in the 25 years following WW#2. However about 1970, a global environmental awakening brought the realization that forests were more than timber factories. There were other very important components that deserved attention, including biological diversity, ecosystem health and vitality, soil and water, and community support. The 1911 Fulton Royal Commission was ahead of its time because it had recognized and understood these components and the need for conservation of forest resources for the longterm benefit of communities and people. It also understood the value of independent forest management within a legal and institutional infrastructure that supports forest stewardship and conservation.

Recently there has been a renewed emphasis in BC on the concept of reliance upon forest professionals with new legislation and policies. However the forest professional continues to work within a traditional tenure system of harvesting rights that results in a fragmentation of responsibilities between licensees and agencies. Much of the planning of forest development and operations remains short term and often involves piecemeal parts of the forest landscape. Also there is the problem of a potential conflict of interest, since many forest professionals receive their wages and fees from the timber interests, including the BC government. How much independence and freedom-to-manage can the professional have within these present arrangements?

Another important issue is that many forest jurisdictions in the world have significant forest stewardship problems because forests are fragmented among different owners. In BC, we are very fortunate to have the majority (95%) of our forestlands owned by the Crown on behalf of the people of the province, thereby avoiding the

serious fragmentation issue. However we have over time through our tenure system and division of stewardship responsibilities (among various government agencies and forest licensees) created a complicated 'too many cooks' situation. A simple, workable alternative is to have a professional steward or a small group of forest professionals, independent of major timber interests, charged with the stewardship of a local landscape.

BC should become serious about the benefit of independent professional forest management, and devolve sustainability responsibilities for local forestlands under charters to local forest authorities. The forest steward would be employed by the local authority, and would be required to meet and maintain professional standards and actions. It's time for change to a workable independent system to ensure appropriate stewardship for BC's forests.

5. Concluding Remarks

The British Columbia Forests Society is conducting a membership drive to increase our profile and visibility, and the capability to respond to various issues and opportunities. We invite you to consider joining us — go to the Membership page, download the membership application form and mail it to us. You could be a fully participating member by contributing your knowledge and skills, or may prefer to take a less-involved position by providing important support through your membership fee. Whatever your situation, we would welcome you aboard.



2761 McColl Place
Victoria BC V8N 5Y8

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

COMMUNITY: _____

PROVINCE: _____ **POSTAL CODE:** _____

PHONE: _____ **E-MAIL:** _____

I/We support the Vision and Mission Statements of the Society,
and agree to abide by the Constitution and Bylaws.

Society Membership Dues (Annual):

- Individual: \$10**
- Family/Organization: \$25**

- Please specify if a paper receipt is required**
(e-mail receipt normally issued)

Date: _____

Signature: _____