



The Best Place on Earth

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September 3, 2009

The Honourable Pat Bell
Minister of Forests and Range
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Bell:

In response to your request at the March 12, 2009 PAC meeting, PAC met in July 2009 to collaborate on a new strategic approach to silviculture in BC. PAC used the **"GROWING OPPORTUNITIES – A New Vision for Silviculture in British Columbia"** discussion paper as a starting point for their discussions, which resulted in the attached recommendations.

PAC strongly supports the proposed strategic approach to silviculture for BC forests and range. This document represents the higher level thinking that PAC believes is necessary to achieve long term success in this endeavour. PAC represents a broad range of perspectives in the BC forest sector, i.e., tourism, local and provincial governments, ranchers, First Nations, loggers, coastal and interior forest industry, conservation and organized labour. This range of perspectives is reflected in PAC's recommendations.

PAC would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide this input and hope that PAC's recommendations will be of value. PAC views this input as a first step, and looks forward to providing more specific recommendations on the framework as it evolves and more details become available.

If you have any further questions please contact either of the PAC Co-Chairs, Jim Snetsinger or Garry Merkel.

Sincerely,

Garry Merkel
Co-Chair
Forest and Range Practices Advisory Council



Forest and Range Practices Advisory Council (PAC)

The BC Minister of Forests and Range requested the Practices Advisory Council (PAC) to provide recommendations regarding a strategic approach to silviculture in BC. PAC used the ***"GROWING OPPORTUNITIES – A New Vision for Silviculture in British Columbia"*** discussion paper as a starting point for discussion when preparing these recommendations.

General Comments

BC has progressed significantly since the mid-1980s with respect to silviculture. BC recognized the necessity to address the growing amount of Non-Satisfactorily Restocked (NSR) lands and also adopted the policy that basic silviculture must be carried out on all areas harvested from that point forward.

All trends show that BC has been successful and has achieved very positive results on the ground, however the current approach is not as strategic as it could be with respect to silviculture investments. PAC feels that BC has reached a point where it needs to once again make a significant evolution in order to realize the benefits of adopting a more business oriented approach to silviculture.

This evolution must focus on creating a framework that allows a range of tools (policies, legislation, resources, research, planning, etc.) to be applied to achieve BC's forest management objectives. All of this will help us to improve and diversify the values and products that we derive from BC's forests. This framework must be built on sound business principles which integrate economic, environmental and social considerations. An investment oriented approach, specific objectives and targets and a high level of collaboration / joint commitment are necessary to ensure success.

Recommended Vision, Principles & Objectives

PAC reviewed the ***"GROWING OPPORTUNITIES – A New Vision for Silviculture in British Columbia"*** discussion paper and generally agrees with the overall direction and suggestions. However PAC recommends that this provincial strategy be re-structured more along the lines of generally adopted strategic planning frameworks with a clear vision, principles and over-arching objectives. To this end PAC recommends the following:

Vision

“BC’s silviculture framework targets investments and products that support forest health and resiliency while maximizing productivity and value throughout a rotation.”

Rationale: We should look to build a long term framework that will create and implement legislation, policy, investment plans, action plans and other elements to achieve our overall strategic silviculture objectives. Ensuring forest health and ecosystem resilience are over-riding priorities - without these nothing else is possible. Within that context PAC supports maximizing productivity, value and the variety of products being produced throughout a rotation.

Principles

PAC feels that many of the principles listed in the discussion paper are actually tactics. Generally, PAC supports these tactics, although we note that some may not apply everywhere. The principles below are proposed to provide a checklist that will guide the design and implementation of the silviculture framework.

- 1) The framework needs to have some certainty and long-term stability. This is not a one-time initiative but rather a permanent change in the way BC approaches silviculture.
- 2) The framework needs to foster collaboration between the key players, e.g., government, industry, First Nations and range interests. This includes clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each party. First Nations are included because this strategy has the potential to significantly impact the size and distribution of natural resources subject to aboriginal rights.
- 3) The framework must include components that allow it to evolve with experience and become more strategic over time (e.g., foster innovation and independent thinking, allow for competition, monitoring & evaluation, etc.).
- 4) The entire framework needs to be built on a solid investment platform (e.g., portfolio management, risk and trade-off analysis, return on investment, asset-based, etc.). Sound business planning is a key element to the successful delivery of a new silviculture vision for BC.
- 5) The framework must foster incentives where all key parties, but most importantly those who made the investment in the first place, will realize the benefits (e.g., security, certainty, return on investment, etc.).
- 6) The framework must focus on achieving results. These results must come early and continue into the indefinite future.

- 7) This framework must recognize that silviculture is a set of tools to manipulate the forest to achieve a range of objectives and diverse products, and that there are other tools that can complement achieving those objectives (e.g., TSR, silviculture type II & III strategies, forest health strategies, range enhancement plans, access plans, species selection initiatives at the landscape level). These tools should be used in combination, not in isolation.
- 8) The actions arising from this framework need to integrate with other initiatives (e.g., SFM, Climate Change, etc.) and be done within the context of higher level plan. This must be done in a manner that does not push this initiative into a land use planning framework.
- 9) The framework and activities arising out of the framework need to be clearly communicated to an extremely wide audience. The goal is to foster a broad understanding of the strategic approach to silviculture in BC.
- 10) The framework must maintain a landscape level view moving towards a more area-based investment methodology. This must be done in a way to engages all tenure holders (e.g. area based, volume based, salvage, etc.).

Objectives

The following are suggested objectives that the overall framework will achieve. As the framework develops PAC recommends that the final objectives have associated performance measures, targets and accountability mechanisms.

- a) Maintain or improve forest and range health, resiliency, and diversity.
- b) Maximize the value for the diversity of forest and range products over the longer term including stabilizing timber supply, maintaining range productivity, and enhancing non-timber values.
- c) Maintain genetic diversity.
- d) Facilitate adaptation to climate change.
- e) Increase the ability of BC's forest and range ecosystems to sequester carbon.

Conclusions

PAC strongly endorses the Minister's direction to implement a strategic silviculture framework for BC forests. Although it is too early to determine if the current legislative framework provides sufficient flexibility to accommodate this strategic silviculture framework, we acknowledge that legislative changes may be required to allow for a new suite of "best practices" to be delivered effectively. While BC has achieved significant success in its silviculture program, it is time to evolve and become even more successful. PAC believes that the recommendations contained in this paper provide a useful starting point for the creation of this framework and looks forward to continued involvement in this regard.