



SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

July 17, 2018

Environmental Assessment Office
PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC
V8W 9V1

Dear EAO Folks,

Re: Revitalization of Environmental Assessment Process

The Society for Ecological Restoration Western Canada chapter (SER-WC) is the local chapter of an international organization (SER International) that seeks to provide sustainable solutions to degraded ecosystems throughout the world. We are pleased to outline three (3) issues which we feel are paramount to addressing in revitalization of the EA process in British Columbia.

Firstly, we believe that the EA process needs to consider restoration early on in the project planning process. Restoration planning should include: i) progressive restoration for step-wise project disturbance activities, and ii) complete restoration of impacts at project closure. Funding for these activities may need to be held in trust (e.g. by a designated government or agency) to avoid the current issue of degraded landscapes sitting for decades and resulting in the loss of ecological goods and services.

Secondly, the EA process should encourage restoration practitioners to forge relationships with First Nations throughout British Columbia. This will support the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action. There are many strong examples of First Nations who have sustainably managed natural resources for thousands of years. These insights need to be included in project development planning. These partnerships will be particularly important in the design of restoration plans and fostering a community of stewardship

Finally, the Cumulative Effects of all projects need to be considered and that where there are adverse impacts these need to be mitigated as part of the development process. For instance a specific project may have a relatively small impact on a local watercourse but, in combination with other incrementally 'small impact' projects there could be significant and irreversible effects to biodiversity and ecological services.

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We recognize that there are significant changes needed in the way EAs are conducted in British Columbia and that the suggestions we have made may need further elaboration. Our organization has as members a diversity of experts in a variety of fields including ecological restoration and we would be pleased to contribute further to the revisions to the EA process.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,
SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION – WESTERN CANADA CHAPTER

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Polster". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David F. Polster, M.Sc., R.P. Bio., CERP
Treasurer