



FRPA Submission - BLBCA Introduction

The Backcountry Lodges of British Columbia Association (BLBCA) represents 31 remotely located, privately owned, lodge operations who provide self-propelled, guided and self-guided activities for visitors from BC, Canada and around the world. BLBCA member lodges are based in rural BC, are economic drivers in their regions while providing valuable employment opportunities and significant tourism revenue.

BLBCA members annually generate over \$13 million in revenue, create approximately 300 full-time jobs each year, and host over 14,000 visitors. As well, our operators purchase over 63% of goods and services within 50kms of their base, offering significant support to local businesses in rural British Columbia.

While we depend on a well-managed forest sector for the sustainability of our business and the health of BC's natural environment, forest management related issues have been the main challenge to the continued viability of our business. The current Forest and Range Practices legislation is largely biased in favour of timber harvesting to the detriment of any other social and economic activity on the land base.

From our perspective BC's forests need to be managed, not administered as they currently are. One step toward that process should be the development of a broad and updated vision for the utilization of our forests that goes beyond supplying fibre for dimensional lumber and strand board. This vision would include a more diverse and integrated economy that leads to a healthier socio-economic climate for rural British Columbia.

Questions taken from Submission Portal and Suggested Answers

1. How should the Province identify opportunities and priorities for adapting forest management to a changing climate, such as mitigating the effects of beetle infestations, drought and fire?

The province needs to take a different approach to forest management such as: Managing for more diverse forest species mix, take a science informed approach on planning for future forests; stop eliminating deciduous forests from the mix, etc.

2. What factors should be considered in the planning of forest operations to reduce the risks of wildfire around your community?

The province needs to be more proactive in its approach to fire management including:

Follow-up and implement many suggestions contained in the 2003 Filmon Report; updating predictive mapping could be useful in order to determine priority deployment Work with the local community in order to create interface priority zones, which will allow the forest industry to access more timber. Ensure that local knowledge is utilized when planning for, or actually fighting a fire; etc.



3. A vital step in landscape-level planning is understanding what is important to the public. Based on what is important to you or your community, what information on the condition of resource values such as species-at-risk habitat do you think is necessary to support the planning process?
Consider values other than traditional harvesting values:
Values that are crucial to our business include: (tourism operations, public recreational use, stewardship, wildlife values, viewscape and access.
Improvements on the land such as trails, cabins, lodges (often with significant capital investment), etc.
4. How would you like to be involved in the planning process?
We need to be engaged in the planning process when (forestry planning has harvesting activities within a set number of km of a licensed operating area
Within my lodge, cabin, access points, satellite camp, river or trail corridors, viewscape, VQOs, etc.
5. Resource roads are a valuable asset in the province as they provide access for the forest industry, ranchers, other resource users, and the public for commercial and recreation purposes. Yet, these same road networks are costly to maintain and have potential negative impacts on wildlife, water quality and fish habitat. What values do you believe are important to consider when planning new roads, road use and maintenance, and deactivation in your area?
Road planning, construction and deactivation should consider:
Overall road density (need to minimize), connectivity, necessity for future access, deactivation timelines (while considering socio-economic value to adjacent communities). As well, impacts on wildlife, water quality, fish habitat, other resource access, public recreation access, terrain and snowpack stability, etc.
6. How can the Province improve transparency and timelines of information regarding proposed operational and landscape-level objectives, plans and results?
The Province should be proactive in its outreach program:
Establish list-serves for interested parties, create a digital portal that will allow interested community members access to forestry planning, hold planning forums for information on new plan objectives in local areas, etc.
7. What information will help inform your feedback on plans that may impact you, your community or your business (e.g., maps of cutblocks and roads planned in your area, hydrological assessments, wildlife habitat areas or recreation opportunities, etc)?
Provide detailed information to interested parties in a timely, easy-to-use digital format:
Use modern digital technology to create a robust and responsive layered mapping tool. The layered maps could provide the location of all resource roads, cutblocks (planned or current), viewscape management (VQOs), planned timing of timber harvests, road construction, other tenures, parks, SARCO areas, etc.



8. What additional values should be considered in FRPA that will allow us to manage forest and range practices in a better way?

FRPA consider some tourism and recreation values when they are made legal but ignores many others: i.e. -

We need FRPA to legally recognize other values of the forest. Constructed assets such as trails, cabins, lodges, camps, access points and other capital investments, etc need to be considered. Natural assets such as viewsapes, wildlife habitat, fish habitat, riparian margins, etc. should also be factored.

9. In what ways should the province strengthen government oversight and industry accountability regarding forest and range activities to better address the challenges of climate change and the interests of all British Columbians?

The province needs to regain legal authority over forest management and shift its vision from optimizing fiber production and forest jobs to maintaining forest health and increasing economic diversification on forest lands. The BC Government needs to manage this valuable resource, not administer it.

In many cases licensees have demonstrated they are mainly interested in optimizing fiber harvest and not the long term well being of BC's forests. Their role should be confined to that function. The role of managing forest resources should be retained by the province.

Licensees/ companies and the foresters that works for them need to be legally accountable for their actions in forest management. An example of strong corporate accountability is the BC Workers Compensation Act. Strong legislation like this would address the lack of professional accountability in this industry and many others.

The role and mandate of the Forest Practices Board should be expanded to more effectively encourage compliance and provide for appropriate enforcement where and when needed.

SUMMARY

The BLBCA and its members look forward to working together with the Provincial government in order to support your efforts to modernize the Forest and Range Practices Act.

We value ecosystems that a healthy forest and progressive, inclusive forest harvesting practices will support. If there is anything that the BLBCA or its members can do to help move this initiative forward, please let us know. We look forward to hearing from you.

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