

Forest and Range Evaluation Program Cultural Heritage Resources Pilot Project

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FREP is in the initial stages of developing a monitoring and effectiveness evaluation program for the Cultural Heritage Resource (CHR) value. This backgrounder provides a high-level introduction to the CHR Pilot Project. For more detailed information, please contact the Project Coordinator, [Lisa Levesque](#).

A BRIEF OVERVIEW

In July-August 2006, the Cultural Heritage Resources Working Group was established and tasked with developing and implementing a pilot strategy for CHR Effectiveness Evaluations. A detailed [project charter](#) was collectively developed and signed in October 2006, and four interested MoFR forest districts (FD) volunteered to participate in the development and implementation of pilot indicators and protocols in collaboration with First Nations and licensees in their districts – Chilcotin FD, South Island FD, Fort St. James FD, and Queen Charlotte Islands FD.



The following research question was identified as a high priority for FREP in 2006-2007:

Are cultural heritage resources being conserved, and where necessary, protected for First Nations cultural and traditional activities as a result of forest practices?

Identifying specific cultural heritage resources on which to focus FREP monitoring efforts is, and will remain a challenge. Each First Nation has a unique interpretation of what this value represents, and many have concerns regarding the confidentiality of sensitive cultural information. Consequently, in order to ensure that our monitoring and evaluation program is relevant, respectful and meaningful, ongoing participation from and dialogue with both First Nations and forest managers will be critical to the success of the program.

Quality Assurance...

...is the consciousness and the discipline to meet the highest standard through systematic processes and continuous improvement.

The FREP Mission:

To be a world leader in Resource Stewardship Monitoring and effectiveness evaluations; providing the science-based information needed for decision-making and continuous improvement of British Columbia's forest and range practices, policies and legislation.

<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/frep/index.htm>

PROJECT OBJECTIVES: PROCESS INDICATORS

For this initial pilot phase of the project, we are focusing on the development of **process indicators and protocols** that can be evaluated at the provincial scale. Specifically, we are aiming to:

1. Evaluate the process of information-sharing between the First Nations and forestry licensees regarding the management of cultural heritage resources during Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) development stages through to harvest and post-harvest activities;
2. Examine how the quality of information-sharing is related to the conservation and protection of cultural heritage resources
3. Consider the effectiveness of the legislated objective for the management of cultural heritage resources under FRPA and other legislation (e.g., the Land Act) from planning stages through to harvest and post-harvest activities
4. Formally review and improve the pilot CHR Effectiveness Evaluation indicators and strategy, and provide recommendations for the development of a more comprehensive set of core and local indicators that can be used for broader program implementation in the future.



- Respectful relationships and ongoing communication are crucial to the effective management of CHR on the land base, but are often lacking for a number of reasons;
- Documentation and availability of CHR information is often limited in many First Nations communities;
- FREP needs to engage First Nations to a greater extent on all aspects of our resource stewardship mandate; and
- Cultural heritage resource values are encompassed in and directly related to all other FREP resource values.

Although our initial focus is to evaluate the process of forest planning and information sharing, there is also considerable interest among First Nations participants to begin discussing more tangible, ground-based, resource-specific issues related to cultural heritage resource management.

March 2007: A Provincial Dialogue session was held in Victoria (March 29-30) attended by First Nations, multiple government agencies, and academia to expand on some of the points raised above. We focused on revising the process indicators, and started to discuss what specific cultural resources FREP should focus on in the future. Some general themes that emerged included:

- Cultural trails and trail networks
- Culturally important plants (food, medicine, ceremony, and materials)
- Riparian forest ecosystems
- Buffer zones around cultural features
- Spiritual and Sacred sites
- Archaeological resources

PROGRESS TO DATE

January 2007: Three initial “indicator development” workshops were held in each pilot district with the following goals:

- **build relationships** between the Forest and Range Evaluation Program (FREP), First Nations, MoFR district and regional staff, and forest licensees;
- to **identify local and regional issues** related to the management of cultural heritage resources; and
- to discuss and gather **feedback** on an initial set of monitoring **indicators** designed to evaluate the processes of planning and information-sharing related to cultural heritage resources.

There were several common themes that emerged:

- Most First Nations are challenged by a lack of capacity and resources to engage in information-sharing and forest management planning;
- First Nations have a great interest in ground-based monitoring, but may lack the resources to do so;

WHAT'S NEXT?

- A Process Indicator Working Group is being established to finalize indicators and protocols with participation from MoFR staff, First Nations, and ILMB.
- First Nations participating in FREP training and field data collection for Riparian and Stand-level Biodiversity in pilot districts during 2007 field season.
- Community meetings, workshops, and field visits being organized in pilot districts to discuss resource-specific concerns, and move forward on ground-based outcome indicators.

