

February, 2000

## **An Overview of the Vancouver Island Summary Land Use Plan**

### ***Purpose of the Summary Plan:***

The Summary Plan was prepared to integrate the 1994 Vancouver Island Land Use Plan, subsequent decisions, and work related to completing the 1994 plan.

The Summary Plan now includes key non-forest uses and incorporates changes to the Forest Practices Code and other relevant policy and legislation.

It provides the results of recent work on resource management objectives and strategies for special management, general and enhanced forestry zones, and relates these objectives and strategies to provisions of the Forest Practices Code.

### ***Summary Plan Consultation:***

Meetings were held from April – June 1999 with key stakeholder groups (environmental, tourism, recreation, mining, forestry, labour, and aquaculture) to explain the format and content of the Summary Plan.

First Nations were invited to meet with government staff but no meeting requests were received.

All groups were invited to submit written comments (7 written comments were received).

This last round of consultation was in addition to the consultation and review undertaken as part of each of the various plan completion projects and the original plan development.

### ***Summary Plan Contents***

#### **1. Description of the Plan area, land use pattern and socio economic profile of Vancouver Island**

## **2. Description of the Planning Process The Commission on Resources and the Environment process began in August 1992 with a recommended plan developed and released in February 1994.**

In June 1994, the Province formally responded to CORE's recommendations with the Vancouver Island Land Use Plan Decision.

In April 1995, the Province endorsed a final set of boundaries for new Goal 1 protected areas established in the 1994 land use decision.

In April 1995, the Province accepted recommendations based on the work of a government technical group and input from key stakeholders, confirming boundaries for Low Intensity Areas (now known as Special Management Zones).

In February 1996, the Province announced its decision on the selection of new special feature (Goal 2) protected areas.

In December 1997, the Province released three key reports for public review:

- Resource Management Zones for Vancouver Island identifying High Intensity Area (now known as Enhanced Forestry Zones) boundaries and management objectives;
- Planning Framework Statements for Vancouver Island's Special Management Zones which consolidated available information and identified planning issues related to SMZs;
- Planning Framework Statements for Vancouver Island's Marine Planning Units to confirm the zoning status of coastal areas within the Plan.

Public feedback on each of these reports led to a number of changes and the final outcomes have been incorporated into the Summary Plan.

## **3. Strategic Direction:**

Establish a protected areas network – the amount of land designated as protected area increased from 10.3% to 13% of the Plan Area.

Secure the forest land base – 81% of the land base secured for commercial timber use, recreation and tourism, mining and other sustainable resource-based activities.

Provide regional biodiversity direction – new protected areas protect key old growth forest ecosystems and special ecological features. Special management zones will serve as regional scale linkages among protected areas in support of biodiversity objectives. As well, biodiversity provisions of the Forest Practices Code will be applied across all resource management zones.

Support food production activities – the Plan affirms the importance of maintaining good food producing areas to meet the future food needs of society, and confirms the role of the Agricultural Land Reserve by designating ALR lands as Agricultural Land in the Plan Area.

Recognize settlement lands – the Plan recognizes existing settlement lands and acknowledges that land use decisions in this category are primarily the responsibility of local government under the Municipal Act and First Nations under the Indian Act.

Maintain energy and mining opportunities – the Plan reflects the extent of current knowledge and preferences regarding energy and mineral development, and encourages responsible exploration and development.

Address integrated coastal management – the Plan affirms the need to achieve integrated coastal management by establishing coastal planning units and priorities for more localized planning.

Promote community stability – the Plan recognizes the need for local input and influence on implementing and monitoring the Plan and related resource management policies. As well, the Plan promotes a range of programs (i.e., Forests Renewal BC) that focus on skills training for displaced workers affected by economic and land use changes.

#### **4. Land Use Designations and Regimes**

- Protected Areas – 13% (438,784 ha)

Objective – to designate, plan and manage protected areas to ensure the maintenance of conservation, recreation and cultural values for which they are established.

- Special RMZ – 8% (22 units covering 268,138 ha)

Contains “special regimes” for the management of the following resources or values:

- timber
- biodiversity
- wildlife management
- visual resources
- recreation resources
- tourism resources
- aquaculture resources

- General RMZ – 31% (25 units covering 1,027,994 ha)

Contains “general regimes” for the management of the following values or resources:

- timber
  - watersheds
  - fish
  - wildlife
  - biodiversity
  - scenery
  - recreation
  - tourism
  - caves/karst
  - cultural heritage
  - access
  - aquaculture
- Enhanced Forestry RMZ – 24% (22 units covering 808,222 ha)

Contains “enhanced regimes” for the management of the following values or resources:

- timber harvesting
  - silviculture management
- Agriculture – 3% (96,500 ha)

Intent: to maintain the integrity of the Agricultural Land Reserve.

- Settlement – 3% (108,000 ha)

Intent: to identify lands where settlement uses and activities necessitate co-operation between all orders of government to properly manage key public resources and values within and adjacent to settlement areas.

- Private – 18%

This category includes large private land holdings (over 250 ha in size) primarily on southeastern Vancouver Island, that are used predominantly as private managed forest land. The management regimes of the Summary Plan only apply to Crown land and private land within Tree Farm Licences.

## **5. Socio-Economic and Environmental Considerations**

Forestry

- New protected areas under the Plan may have produced difficult short-term adjustments in some communities and for some workers. Enhanced Forestry RMZs may partially offset these impacts.
- Phased in harvest reductions, other initiatives (i.e. FRBC), and transition strategies by the private sector have helped with community and worker adjustment.

#### Environment/Biodiversity

- New protected areas should result in a net benefit to the environment and contribute to biodiversity through the increase in representation of key ecosystems.

#### Tourism and Recreation

- Creation of new parks should significantly enhance the potential for nature-based tourism growth.
- SMZ areas may also add to ecotourism growth.

#### Mining

- Some impacts from new protected areas on tenure holders will be resolved through the Compensation Regulation of the Mining Rights Amendment Act. The Plan direction and Mining Rights Amendment Act affirm access rights to all Crown lands outside protected areas, and the Mineral Exploration Code provides for timely approval of exploration proposals. Existing no-staking reserves will be reviewed to determine if they continue to be required.

#### Energy

- Negligible impacts; most growth in energy demand will likely be met by off-Island sources (Vancouver Island gas pipeline and BC Hydro's grid)
- Recent oil and gas industry interest in coalbed methane gas opportunities on Vancouver Island are focussed on General Management Zones where plan direction recognizes responsible energy-related exploration and development
- Offshore exploration and development will depend on federal and provincial decisions re: the existing offshore moratorium.

#### Fisheries

- Risk of habitat degradation reduced through new protected areas and SMZs.

#### Aquaculture

- New protected areas and 1km buffer have precluded about 14% of ocean area classified as having good potential for finfish aquaculture, and some potential shellfish sites have also be affected.
- Growth in the industry can be accommodated on existing and potential sites outside protected areas.

#### Agriculture

- Potential reduction in the agricultural land base outside of the Agricultural Land Reserve due to development pressures, particularly in the southeast portion of Vancouver Island.
- The ALR contains sufficient amounts of currently uncultivated or under-cultivated land to accommodate future market growth, assuming these lands are appropriately planned and managed.

#### Social Impacts/Transition and Mitigation

- Net effect of the Plan in the medium to longer term appears to be to accelerate an already occurring restructuring of the economy.
- The Plan appears to reinforce increasing diversification of the Island economy.

## **6. Plan Implementation, Monitoring and Amendment**

Implementation of the Plan will be reflected in the delivery of agency programs, initiatives and tenure decisions.

The Special and Enhanced RMZs, as well as key RMZ objectives for forest practices and resources, will be declared as Resource Management Zones under the higher level plan provisions of the Forest Practices Code, to direct subsequent operational planning.

The strategic direction, objectives and strategies and procedures for non-forest uses and activities represent the approved government policy direction for the Plan area, and are to be followed by agencies.

The term of the plan (life span) is 10 years, with a formal review to commence in the year 2003.

The Vancouver Island Inter-Agency Management Committee (IAMC) of provincial government agency managers will coordinate development of a long-term implementation strategy for the Plan.

A Plan Monitoring Committee, made up of Island-wide stakeholders, First Nations and government representatives, will be established to advise the IAMC on plan implementation, monitoring and amendment issues, and provide advice on Plan interpretation and proposed amendments.

The Nootka Sound and Mt. Waddington Community Resource Boards will continue to play a key role in local implementation of the Plan. The CRBs will be represented on the Plan Monitoring Committee.

In collaboration with the Plan Monitoring Committee, the IAMC will oversee the preparation and review of an annual public report on the status and effectiveness of Plan implementation. The first annual implementation report will be completed by March 31, 2001.

Implementation will also occur through the development of more specific, detailed planning activities (i.e. landscape unit planning)