

NEW APPROACHES TO ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA'S COASTAL FORESTS

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Abstract

By the late 1990s nearly two decades of conflict and controversy resulted in a stalemate between parties with competing interests in temperate old growth rainforests in British Columbia, Canada. In the years since, collaboration between groups traditionally at odds with each other has created a period during which all parties are able to focus on the innovation of new approaches to forest management. This paper discusses an initial framework agreement reached in 2001 regarding rainforests in seven million hectares on BC's Central and North Mainland Coasts – an area also known as “The Great Bear Rainforest”. The agreement involved a number of different elements and will take several years to implement.

Parties to the *2001 BC Coastal Framework Agreement* included local indigenous peoples (First Nations), forest companies, environmental non-government organizations (ENGOS), the BC government, local communities and logging contractors and forest workers. The pathway to this interim required all the different groups involved to come to the realization that though they were each capable of wielding significant power, none was in a position to achieve what they wanted on a unilateral basis. By 1999, parties with competing interests in coastal forest issues concluded that, despite ongoing disagreements, they needed to find a way to work together to develop new approaches to reconciling tensions between conservation and development in coastal BC rainforests. This paper looks at how collaboration between dissimilar, and sometimes even adversarial interests, can be a catalyst for change as well as a strategy for problem solving in situations that have become so complex and interdependent that no individual group or organization can manage change solely through its own action. The BC coastal experience may be helpful to others involved in conflicts over forest conservation and use.

Introduction

The last two decades have seen growing concern over deforestation and forest degradation. This has resulted in calls for more forest conservation and improved forest management worldwide. British Columbia, Canada, has been one of the areas where controversy over forests has occurred. The following paper examines how, in 2001, industry, conservation groups, First Nations, government and community representatives on the BC coast managed to reach a framework agreement designed to both conserve forests and allow for resource development in previously controversial areas.

British Columbia's Forests

British Columbia is Canada's western-most province. Ninety-four percent of the land is publicly owned. The government of British Columbia manages this land and authorizes its use by private companies and the public for logging, mining, grazing, recreation and other activities. More recently, indigenous peoples

(“First Nations”) seeking resolution of land claims and aboriginal title issues have challenged that authority. The aboriginal context around forest issues in BC is discussed in another section of this paper.

Forests cover two thirds of the province’s 95 million hectares and fourteen distinct biogeoclimatic zones. Old growth forest accounts for more than 40 per cent of BC’s forested land. Of the 60 million hectares of forest, 25 million hectares – or a little over 40 per cent – is considered available and suitable for harvesting given current regulations and technology (BC Ministry of Forests).

Coastal rainforest occupies over 10 million hectares, or 11 percent of the province. BC’s rainforests are roughly defined as the Coastal Western Hemlock biogeoclimatic zone, a mild, wet climate that runs the length of BC’s coast. These forests are made up of trees of various sizes and species, mostly coniferous, forming a complex multi-layered canopy, including standing dead trees and large fallen trees. Older forests, roughly defined as more than 250 years of age for coastal species, accounts for an estimated 54 per cent of the rainforest, or almost 3.9 million hectares (MacKinnon et al. 1995). Old growth rainforests on the BC coast represent about one-quarter of the remaining coastal temperate rainforests worldwide (Kellogg 1992).

Historically, British Columbia's approach to commercial forestry has involved the provincial government (“the Crown”) retaining ownership of forest lands while licensing harvesting rights (or concessions) on Crown land to private companies under long-term tenure agreements. Payment for resource rights usually takes the form of royalty payments (“stumpage”) and/ or other fees. From an economic and business strategy perspective what this means is that forest companies in Canada do not own the land they operate on and therefore tend to have less capital invested in it than is the case in the US, where forest companies mainly operate on privately owned land. Instead, most Canadian forest companies pay fees to the government for their timber and direct the balance of their investment to transportation, manufacturing and marketing infrastructure.

Meanwhile, the employment generated by forest-based activities as well as related economic development creates tax revenues for the provincial and federal government. Finally, companies with harvesting rights in BC (“tenure holders or licensees”) are expected to build and operate processing facilities that provide further jobs and revenues in which the Crown shares. In addition, companies operating on crown land are responsible for liabilities arising from harvesting activities, including road maintenance and decommissioning and silviculture.

The Crown retains responsibility for stewardship of the resource. As the forest sector has evolved, the BC government has transferred to forest companies, through regulation or other legally binding agreements, the responsibility to reforest, to build and decommission roads and to manage the licensed lands for non-commercial values including recreation and wildlife habitat.

In the coastal forest zones, where 80 per cent of the currently available allowable annual cut is estimated to be from forests over 140 years in age (BC Ministry of Forests unpublished estimate), these policies have created a historical social contract based on an exchange of timber for jobs, investment and community economic development. Forest companies in BC have built a world-scale industry based on producing large volumes of commodity forest products for export markets, primarily the United States and -- since the mid-1980s -- Asia. In return, the province of BC has benefited from substantial domestic employment and a stable stream of revenues from which to build public infrastructure (such as transportation systems) and finance public services including healthcare and education.

The Rise of Environmental Consciousness in the Forest Sector

In the late 1970s new forces arose to challenge the assumptions surrounding forest use and management on the coast of BC. The rise of environmental consciousness in the developed world led many people to reassess their views of what constitutes responsible management and conservation of forest values, including the world's remaining coastal temperate old growth rainforests.

Calls for increased forest conservation in the last two decades were many and varied. The World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 noted a consensus of professional opinion that the total expanse of protected areas needed to be at least tripled if it was to constitute a representative sample of the earth's ecosystems. Chapter 11 of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference of Environment and Development called for enhancing the protection, sustainable management and conservation of all types of forests.

Global conservation groups such as the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), recommended establishment of an ecologically representative network of protected area covering at least 10% of the world's ecosystems.

More recently, conservation groups have focused on the need to protect forests considered rare at the global level. Names for these types of forest vary. They can be called pristine, intact, endangers or other terms meant to convey unique, exception or high value from a conservation and biodiversity perspective. Examples include Conservation International's identification of 25 "hot spots" as the richest and most threatened reservoirs of plant and animal life on Earth and Union of Concerned Scientists, *Logging Off, Mechanisms to Stop or Prevent Industrial Logging in Forests of High Conservation Value*. The World Resources Institute's 1997 report *The Last Frontier Forests: Ecosystems and Economics on the Edge* attempted to identify the world's large intact natural forests and noted the biodiversity values associated with coastal old growth forests as rare on a global scale.

Since the 1980s more and more ecologists have come to paint a portrait of the earth as a single complex ecosystem in which all of its parts are interconnected. While parks and protected areas were originally considered a cornerstone for conserving important environmental values, that view has expanded. New developments in conservation biology have shifted emphasis away from "islands" of protected areas towards the need for ecosystem management and the adoption of a bioregional approach within which protected areas need to be considered in a broader geographic and land use context. [United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, 2001)

Beginning in the early 1990s shifts in broadly based social values on forest and environmental issues in North America and Europe triggered a series of confrontations on the BC coast between environmental activists, loggers, forest companies, First Nations, forest-dependent communities and government over forest issues. In the US, environmental groups mounted legal challenges (often under US federal endangered species legislation) to restrict harvesting activities on both publicly-owned and privately owned lands. Faced with a different legislative environment in BC as well as the fact that unlike the US, the majority of forestland in Canada continues to be publicly owned, environmental groups adopted a different course. Instead of focusing on litigation they sought to bring pressure to bear on the BC government and the BC forest industry by mounting market campaigns that targeted international buyers of BC coastal forest products.

The first notable example of this followed protests in the summer of 1993 over logging in Clayoquot Sound, an area on the west coast of Vancouver Island. The Clayoquot protests led to the arrest of over eight hundred people in the largest incident of civil disobedience in Canadian history. They also marked the introduction of market-based campaigns targeting international customers of the BC-based forest

company (MacMillan Bloedel Limited) with harvesting rights in Clayoquot. [Stanbury 2000, Wilson 1998]

Growing pressure and controversy both within BC and abroad over forest and environmental issues led to reform of British Columbia's forest policy regime during the 1990s. A Forest Practices Code (FPC) with independent audits to ensure compliance set new standards for riparian management, road construction, soil conservation and other forest values. The provincial forests ministry undertook a comprehensive review of timber supply, resulting in reductions in the annual allowable cut (AAC) on the coast. The provincial government also initiated a Protected Areas Strategy (PAS) aimed at setting aside a minimum of 12 per cent of British Columbia's lands and foreshore, chosen on the basis of representative ecosystems, from economic development. Locally based multi-stakeholder land-use planning processes led to the creation of various Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP) tables mandated to make recommendations to the provincial Cabinet on land management and conservation issues. These processes led to a doubling of protected areas to approximately 12.5 million hectares (BC Ministry of Forests) and brought the province much closer to its 12 per cent goal.

Calls for more ecosystem-based management of coastal forests challenged all of the different groups involved in coastal forest issues to come to grips with the fact that conservation of globally significant forest biodiversity on the BC coast required better integration of conservation objectives with development needs at the local community level. New types of harvesting and silviculture emerged in Clayoquot that sought to retain structural elements of existing stands. Called variable retention, the system retains varying amounts, types and spatial patterns of living and dead trees across the landscape (MacMillan Bloedel Limited 1998). These approaches combined with other new practices began to expand the management options available to coastal BC foresters.

In 1997, the Sierra Club of BC released a GIS forest cover map in support of their claim that more than half of the low elevation old growth temperate rainforest was gone, and that indicated that the largest remaining areas of pristine forest on the BC coast (over 100 valleys) were on the North and Central mainland coast. ENGOs called the area the "*Great Bear Rainforest*" for its population of grizzlies as well as the presence of the unique white bear (Kermode), also known as the "Spirit Bear". They argued that the province's approach to conservation was resulting in disproportionate protection for alpine areas and low productivity forests and warned that if that trend continued on the North and Central mainland coasts, the last large areas of intact or undeveloped rainforest in BC would be lost. Conversely, the forest industry argued that the conservation agenda was extreme and did not consider social and economic factors. Meanwhile the BC government set out to resolve controversy over the area through a consensus based land use planning process.

For some the forest policy reforms of the 1990s in BC were significant and far-reaching and marked the emergence of a new era based on more sustainable approaches to resource management. For others the changes that occurred were not nearly enough. Regardless, the evolution of forest policy on the BC coast in the 1990s went largely unnoticed by the rest of the world. There were two reasons for this: 1) the failure of locally based land use planning processes to develop locally and globally credible management and conservation plans in those areas of the province still containing large tracts of undeveloped or pristine coastal forests; 2) the failure of a modern-day Treaty process in BC to resolve aboriginal land claims.

The absence of flexible economic mechanisms for equitably dealing with the cost impacts of tenure reallocation and reduction was also a major structural reason for the BC coastal forest to achieve validation in the international marketplace for improvements in its environmental performance in the 1990s.

Aboriginal Rights and Title

British Columbia is unique among Canadian provinces and territories in that few treaties were negotiated and signed between the Crown and the province's First Nations. The provincial Crown long contended that, whatever aboriginal title existed before British Columbia joined the Canadian Confederation was extinguished when the union took place.

In 1997, however, Canada's Supreme Court ruled that aboriginal title was never extinguished and left definition of aboriginal title and terms of any subsequent settlements to be established through tripartite negotiations among first nations and the federal and provincial governments (government-to-government negotiations). As a result, British Columbia's First Nations have unresolved claims potentially affecting most of the province's Crown lands, including almost all of the commercial forestland on the coast. A treaty process to resolve those claims has so far produced some interim Agreements-in-Principle but no final settlements.

The failure of the Treaty process in BC has led to ongoing court challenges and much confusion over what constitutes aboriginal title and appropriate consultation with First Nations on land use issues. A number of recent court decisions are redefining the legal relationship between British Columbia and Aboriginal peoples and increasing the need to consult and accommodate First Nations interests on forest management and conservation issues.

Coastal Land Use Planning

As mentioned above, in the 1990s, the British Columbia government implemented a Land and Resource Management Planning (LRMP) system using a locally based consensus approach to resolving land use issues. Such a process for the province's Mainland Central Coast, an area of some 4.8 million hectares including large areas of coastal temperate rainforest and many pristine watersheds, had been initiated in the mid 1990s.

Dissatisfied with the planning process for the Central Coast established by the provincial government, in 1995 Greenpeace and other environmental groups launched "*The Great Bear Rainforest Campaign*" to promote protection of old growth rainforests on the BC Central and Northern Coast. Building on experiences with the market campaign following the Clayoquot protests that had convinced MacMillan Bloedel to change its ways, a coalition of environmental groups (Greenpeace, ForestEthics, Rainforest Action Network) began a campaign urging international customers not to buy forest products made by companies with harvesting rights on the BC mainland Central and North Coast ("the Great Bear Rainforest"). [Greenpeace, 1995]

Over the next few years, the BC Mainland Coast became the focus of an increasingly bitter dispute in the international marketplace between forest companies and environmental groups. Much of the controversy stemmed from the argument mounted by environmental groups that the large tracts of undeveloped old growth temperate rainforest still remaining on the BC coast were rare from a global biodiversity perspective. Meanwhile, harvesting rights in some of those forests had been allocated to companies in advance of development of comprehensive land use and conservation plans.

By the late 1990s it was clear that the rainforests on the BC coast were important globally because of their biodiversity values and important locally because of their social and economic values. Thus emerged a very high-profile example of the dilemma that lies at the heart of sustainable development: the need to reconcile global and local perspectives.

Stalemate

Eventually, the conflict between the coastal forest companies and environmental groups reached the point where the companies, the BC government and the communities dependent on commercial forestry no longer had enough credibility *outside the province* to define a conservation plan for the area in question due to their perceived bias towards timber production. Environmental groups and supporters, including urban populations *both inside and outside of BC*, were in a position to successfully challenge any plan not supported by the environmental movement. Similarly and conversely, the environmental movement did not have sufficient credibility *within the province* to define a management plan for the area due to their perceived bias towards conservation. First Nations and local communities were in a position to successfully challenge any plan that did not address social, cultural and economic needs.

The Emergence of “Change Agents”

As the conflict between BC's coastal forest industry and environmental groups reached a stalemate in spring of 2000, it became apparent that any resolution must involve innovation and a significant change in the status quo. It also became clear there would have to be movement beyond reliance on regulatory mechanisms if forest management goals were to include higher levels of conservation.

By the late 1990s both the industry and environmental camps in BC concluded that though each had enough power to impose significant damage on the other, neither was in a position to achieve a victory and accomplish its goals. The realization that the status quo was neither maintainable nor desirable led to the emergence of the *Joint Solutions Project* and the *Turning Point Initiative*.

The Turning Point Initiative was an alliance between a group of eight coastal First Nations arising from the failure of the treaty negotiating process to resolve First Nations issues around land use planning, economic benefits and conservation. Supported by the David Suzuki Foundation, the First Nations involved in the initiative were the Haida, the Heiltsuk, the Haisla, the Gitga'at, the Oweekeno, the Nuxalk, the Metlakatla, and the Kitasoo/ Xaixais

The Joint Solutions Project was an alliance between forest companies and environmental groups arising from the failure of the locally based multi-stakeholder land use planning process (LRMP) to resolve controversy in the marketplace over the future of pristine watersheds in the area. The forest companies involved are Western Forest Products, Canadian Forest Products, NorskeCanada, Weyerhaeuser and International Forest Products. The environmental groups involved are Greenpeace, the Sierra Club of BC, the Rainforest Action Network and ForestEthics. The companies organized themselves into a caucus called the Coast Forest Conservation Initiative (CFCI) for the purpose of promoting development of a conservation and management plan for the Central and North Coast of BC that would be credible both locally and globally. The ENGOS organized themselves into a caucus called the Rainforest Solutions Project (RSP) for the purpose of promoting conservation options and economic alternatives to industrial logging on the Central and North Coast. The Joint Solutions Project (JSP) was the name given to the table where both sides met for the purpose of exploring joint problem solving.

Although all of these ad hoc caucuses had different objectives and motivations, important points of overlap between them created alliances that became all the more powerful as a result of their involvement of dissimilar interests. In early 2000 the CFCI companies entered into an agreement with Greenpeace, ForestEthics, the Rainforest Action Network and the Sierra Club of BC to collaborate on developing an ecosystem-based model for conservation and management of coastal forests in ways that fully integrate social, economic and ecological needs. To create a conflict-free period in which to develop on new

approaches, the coastal companies and the ENGOs participating in marketing campaigns against them agreed to a “quid pro quo”: the companies would defer logging in environmentally contentious areas and the environmental groups would stop conducting market campaigns against the products they produced. Meanwhile, both sides would use the “conflict-free” period created by this quid pro quo to work with First Nations and multi-stakeholder land use planning processes to develop ecosystem plans for the region as a whole based on independent science informed by local and traditional knowledge.

Reaction in BC to news of an agreement between coastal forest companies and environmental groups was largely positive with urban publics but negative among forest-dependent communities, First Nations and the BC government. Each of the latter felt that both the companies and the environmental groups were overstepping their authority in reaching consensus recommendations on resource management issues. Backlash to the agreement caused internal disagreements in both industry and environmental caucuses and some individual members withdrew for a period of time.

Despite this upheaval, there was firm agreement by all parties on coastal forest issues that ‘the status quo was not an option’. Three ideas were now being discussed more broadly by the Joint Solutions Process, Turning Point First Nations and groups participating in the BC government led-LRMP.

1. Independent science to inform decision making;
2. A new model of forestry based on ecosystem principles that also addressed cultural, social and economic factors;
3. The costs of transition would be shared and not rest on one or a few parties.

With First Nations determined to take a lead role, all parties returned to the negotiating table. Twelve months later, on April 4, 2001, an Interim Land Use Plan for the BC Central Coast was announced, as was an historic Protocol Agreement between the BC government and several First Nations on Interim Economic Measures and Land Use Planning.

Parties to the 2001 agreements included First Nations, the BC government, ENGOs, forest companies, local communities and local logging contractors and forest workers. The agreements established a framework for moving forward based on the following commitments by everyone involved:

1. Designation of an additional 6,300 square kilometres of *Protection Areas* on the BC Central Coast.
2. Completion of *First Nation and locally-based multi-stakeholder (LRMP) land use planning processes* for the BC mainland Central Coast, North Coast and Haida Gwaii/ Queen Charlottes. (Timelines: June/03 for Central Coast; March/04 for North Coast and Haida Gwaii/ Queen Charlottes.)
3. Final approval of land use plans for all three areas will be a product of *Government-to-Government discussions* (i.e. between the BC government and local First Nations).
4. Harvesting deferrals in 5,500 square kilometers of *Option Areas* on the Central Coast until development of an *Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) Framework* and completion of land use plans. (Note: additional areas on the North Coast and Haida Gwaii/ Queen Charlottes (“Haida Interest Areas”) were also identified for harvesting deferral until land use planning processes in these areas are completed.)
5. Development of an *Ecosystem-Based Management Framework (EBM)* to help inform land use decision-making processes. The EBM framework will be developed by an independent scientific team, the *Coast Information Team (CIT)*, and will include local and traditional knowledge in its analyses of social, cultural, economic and ecological factors at a regional scale.
6. Development and implementation of *Pilot Projects* on EBM and conservation investment or other economic incentives for low impact management.

7. Support for *Interim (Treaty) Measures* for First Nations involving the allocation of forest tenure to coastal aboriginal communities and the creation of new economic opportunities for First Nations.
8. Commitment to *orderly transition* and *equitable management of the impact of change* on forest-dependent communities, workers, contractors and companies.

Additional voluntary commitments made by forest companies and environmental groups participating in the Joint Solutions Project:

9. Provide \$1 million each to support a coastal resolution (through work being done by the CIT & the JSP).
10. ENGOs suspend market campaigns against BC coastal companies agreements while proper planning commitments hold.
11. Companies will not harvest in Option Areas on the Central Coast or deferral areas on the North Coast and HG/ QCI (“Haida Interest Areas”) until land use planning processes in each of these areas have been completed.

Shortly after the BC Coastal Framework Agreement was announced in April 2001, a provincial election was held resulting in a new government being voted into office. In November 2001 the new BC government announced it would proceed to implement the agreement under a streamlined process for LRMP planning administered by the new BC Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management (MSRM). The companies and environmental groups participating in the JSP subsequently entered into a unique funding agreement with the BC government to share the cost of the initial \$1 million (Canadian) required to fund a team of scientists to implement the independent science component of the resolve.

Conclusion

The processes now underway on the BC coast on forest issues are extraordinarily complex. Events that were key to the creation of the Coastal Framework Agreement included:

- Adoption by the German paper and publishing industry and large North American retailers such as Home Depot of procurement policies that linked forest products and practices to environmental considerations;
- Willingness of BC coastal forest companies to engage in voluntary harvesting moratoria;
- Willingness of environmental groups to channel money earmarked for the markets campaign to a locally-based solutions process;
- Agreement to create a conflict-free period of time in which all parties could focus on innovation;
- Willingness of First Nations to adopt Ecosystem Based Management and independent science;
- Willingness of First Nations to develop land use plans;
- Willingness of First Nations to take a leadership role in bringing parties together;
- Willingness of BC government and companies to apply conservation biology and ecosystem-based management to forest planning;
- Willingness of First Nations and the BC government to pursue new decision making processes based on government-to-government negotiations;
- Promise and eventual provision of funding and assistance for community transitions;
- Realization by parties to the dispute that achievement of their environmental, economic, social and cultural goals could not be achieved through conflict.

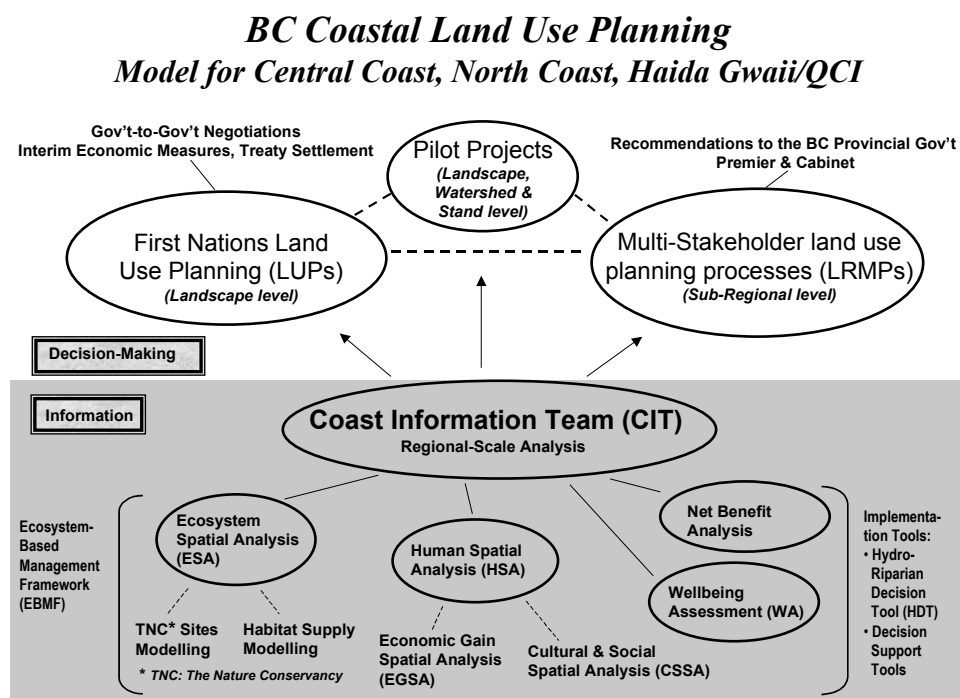
Forest and environmental issues on the BC coast may be unique in terms of the solution envisioned, but the underlying problem – tension between conservation and economic development – is far from unique. The pathway to the 2001 Coastal Framework Agreement demonstrates how the complex issues around

forest management and conservation require a willingness by adversarial interests to enter into a conflict free period of time in which it will be possible for all parties to focus on innovation. Through ongoing dialogue and collaboration, solutions can emerge that could never have been conceived or implemented by any one party. The results are a model from coastal BC that may have application in other forest regions.

APPENDIX

This paper considered how controversy over management and conservation of coastal forests unleashed a decade of change in the way in which forest companies, the provincial government and environmental groups approached forest and environmental issues on the BC Coast. In addition to the processes and dynamics described in this paper it is important to recognize that other important processes are currently underway on the coast of BC that will no doubt have a major impact on forest issues. A restructured Treaty process is currently trying to address unresolved aboriginal title issues. In addition, the coastal BC forest sector is currently in the process of a major industrial downsizing and restructuring to address issues associated with costs, competitiveness and the impact of a US countervailing duty on imports of Canadian softwood. The Canada/ US softwood lumber dispute has also triggered another round of forest policy reform in BC.

At the time of writing, implementation of the BC Coastal Framework Agreement is proceeding under the interdependent processes outlined below.

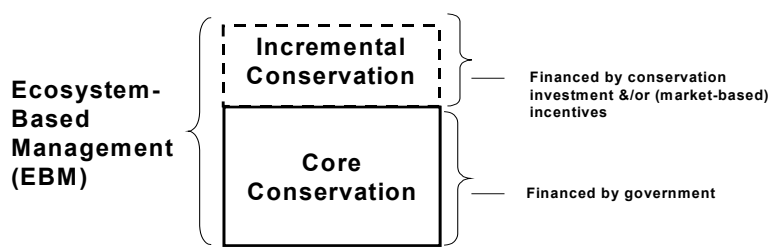


Incentives for Conservation Financing and Investment

Forest companies, environmental groups, First Nations and government agencies are participating in pilot projects and/ or operating trials designed to test new approaches to ecosystem-based management in coastal forests with important conservation values. Led by the Kitsoo and Gitgat First Nations, one of these pilot projects will try to introduce incentives for investment in enhanced conservation in a manner also capable of creating social and economic benefits. Options being considered are land and investment trusts linked to specific targets for conservation and revenue generation from conservation values such as carbon, water, habitat and biodiversity.

The following diagram provides an illustration of some of the assumptions to be tested in this project.

Role of Pilot Projects
***Will also test new market-based incentives for investment in
 conservation outside of formally Protected Areas***
*How to finance additional / incremental conservation arising from
 application of Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM) framework?*



2002 Developments

At the time of writing the following developments have occurred in various implementation processes stemming from the 2001 Coastal Framework Agreement.

- Interim Designation of Central Coast Protection Areas
- Establishment of a \$35 million (Cdn) Sustainability Trust to address workers, logging contractors & communities affected by protection areas and harvesting deferrals
- Establishment of the independent science team (Coast Information Team, CIT) funded by an additional \$2.2 million (Cdn) provided by government, forest companies and environmental groups (for a total of \$3.2 million)
- Establishment of a Working Group on Conservation Investment and Incentives
- Establishment of a Completion Table for the Central Coast LRMP
- Establishment of a LRMP table for the North Coast
- Discussions between the Haida First Nations and the BC government on the design of land use planning processes for Haida Gwaii/Queen Charlottes
- Further talks between the BC government and First Nations on Economic Measures and First Nations Land Use Planning

Contextual Note -- Forest Ownership in Canada vs. the US

Differences between forest land ownership in Canada and the US are worth noting because they have also been central to the development of some of the new approaches discussed in this paper.

For the most part, the US forest industry is based on intensive management (or management for timber production) of privately owned forest lands -- usually plantations made up of second or third-growth trees. Key environmental objectives associated with intensive management of private timberlands in the US are enforced through various State and Federal regulations aimed at protecting core ecological values, including water quality, soil stability, and endangered species. In addition, many commercial timber land owners in the US often work on a voluntary basis to provide access to their lands for multiple use purposes at the local community level.

Private forest companies in the US own a significant portion of the forest land that is managed for timber production and most of the land is involved is zoned for that purpose. For the most part, forests that are managed for a broader range of values beyond timber production tend not to be owned by forest companies. Instead, they are owned by the US Federal Forest Service or various state agencies or private trusts (i.e. The Nature Conservancy) that have been formed for the purpose of managing land for conservation and/ or recreational emphasis. Hence different forest management objectives in the US also tends to be characterized by different types of ownership. Vehicles for conservation environmental values on forest land can range from fee-simple ownership of property to more targeted conservation easements or covenants held by one group while ownership or the other values associated with the property can continue to be held by another party (Forest Trends, 2001).

Zoning forests for different management objectives is also a common tool in Canadian forest policy. However, unlike the US, most commercial forestland in Canada has not been previously harvested and is still in a natural state. Even more significantly, the majority of forestland in Canada is still owned by a single owner -- the Canadian public through different levels of government. Finally, it is important to recognize that the scale of forest issues in Canada and the US is significantly different. For example, a province like British Columbia is as large as the States of Washington, Oregon and California combined but has a population of less than 10% of its three US Pacific Northwest neighbours (4 million versus 44 million).

Differences in size, population, geography and, perhaps most significantly, the fact that ownership of forest land in Canada is not as diverse as it is in the US, has resulted in the creation of a forest industry in Canada based on extensive management of vast areas of publicly-owned forest land according to principles and practices designed not only to protect core environmental values, but to also address uses that range from conservation to industrial resource extraction. The use of instruments such as conservation easements or covenants to secure enhanced investment in conservation values is not common on either Crown (public) land or First Nations territories in Canada. Hence the significance of the pilot projects now underway on the BC Coast.

The extensive nature of forestry in Canada and continued public ownership of the majority of the Canadian forest also means that Canadian forest companies tend to have more accountability for broader social and conservation outcomes than their American counterparts. This in turn can create a business incentive for Canadian companies to pursue a portfolio of forest practices and management strategies capable of addressing a broader spectrum of uses and issues, including conservation and low impact management. Finally, for the reasons outlined above, forest companies in Canada are likely to have more interest in promoting innovation in the development of industrial forest management systems designed to maintain natural forest attributes as opposed to convert natural forests to plantations. All of these

considerations were and continue to be factors affecting the behaviour of coastal BC forest companies on environmental issues.

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