

Manager's Forum

A BCCFA 2013 Conference Session Summary

Don Brown, Moderator

The Manager's Forum is an opportunity for exchange of information, ideas and dialogue about the questions, issues and concerns of interest to managers of community forests (CFA). The outcomes of the session will help to inform the work of BCCFA Executive Director and board of directors in their efforts to improve the success of community forest initiatives.

Don opened the session with the comment that this is an informal session for managers to share their problems and successes.

Topics identified for discussion:

- Single Cutting Permit (1CP) Policy
- Opportunities for expansion for CFAs
- Administrative streamlining
- Non Timber Forest Resources
- Tabular Rates
- Landscape Management
- Wood Sales
- Management Plans and Forest Stewardship Plans

Single Cutting Permit (1CP) Policy

- Esk'etemc has had it for a year and has had some pleasant surprises. They were able to use the 1CP to speed up access for spacing through LBI. Ecosystem restoration funds also came their way, and it was easy because they had their 1CP. It gives access to treatment opportunities that otherwise would have been bogged down in bureaucracy.
- There are two pieces with First Nation information sharing - You still have to complete AOAs, and there then is information sharing.
- Each situation is different for information sharing. Each relationship is different.
- 1CP is very efficient when you are actually logging.
- A concern is raised that with 1CP traceability will be lost. You lose the opportunity to tell the story behind the wood.

Question - How do you manage budgets and sales with only one timber mark?

- We work in subunits of the Community Forest. We track the sub units.
- We track by cut block

The community forests in Kootenays met with the District Manager to talk about 1CP. They asked if there could be multiple “1CP” over the same tenure area. It would allow them to assign 1CP to 1 logger, and 1CP to another logger. Question to the group - Could this work?

- When you put it in FTA it would be a conflict – unless they are in different areas.
- Action: Looking into Erik’s question. Doug has FTA experts that can check on this.

Question - Do all other permits have to be closed? Apparently there are different ideas on the answer to this.

Expansion

Question – Are there opportunities for expansion at the community level?

- Government is looking at the volume to area based tenure conversion enabling legislation. The BCCFA needs to mobilize our mayors, councillors, and Regional District reps to say that communities want a take-back if there are going to be conversions. This is the opportunity for community forests. It is a win for the majors as well if the communities are taking the most highly constrained areas around communities. The majors will still be able to purchase the logs.
- This is TOP PRIORITY for Expansion efforts this year. Must develop a 1 Pager that BCCFA members can pass on to Mayors.
- Purchasing woodlots is not an option. The Forest Act was amended so that if you have over 10,000 m3 already under tenure, then you are not eligible for a woodlot.
- A concern was voiced that if we raise our profile, then we will have the tab rates removed.

Comment from Doug Stewart - There is a need for short and long term strategies. We need to use the AAC already apportioned to the program before that volume disappears. Second, with the volume to area conversion, it was decided that we would not have a mandatory take back, but it is something we could reconsider. There are not likely to be that many conversions.

Really to expand the program you need another take-back. We need to get all of the politicians on side – and need the documentation of what are the benefits of community forests for the economy & province. If there was to be a take back, government would need to buy that volume from the majors.

Question - What about conversion of any sort of volume-base tenure to any sort of area-based tenure? This is something we might look at in the coming consultation process.

- Rolling in volume from other licensees must be considered on a case by case basis. It is complicated because we don’t really have legislation that converts volume to CFAs.

Non-Timber Forest Resources

Question - Does the membership support the idea of getting a regulation in place so that the community forests that want to move forward on NTFRs can do so?

- The Esk'etemc Chief is afraid that without a regulation, outsiders will come and harvest mushrooms, and push out the local First Nations (FN).
- If you make an investment – like inoculated with mushroom spores and grow mushrooms, then you can't exclude people from harvesting without a regulation.
- Harrop Procter was active in the beginning in NTFPs, but made it a lower priority over time. But will it become a higher priority if there is actually a regulatory framework.
- If there is enabling regulation you can then move forward with a plan in place and harvesting can happen under certain circumstances.
- A strong enforcement regime will need to be in place. Government thought once more First Nation Woodland Licenses (FNWLs) were issued and if they wanted to pursue a regulation, then it could be looked at and see if CFAs could be integrated. It will not be an easy thing to put into place.
- Quebec Model Forest was making more on blueberries than on wood.
- Traditional Use trumps any commercial activity.
- When Cortes looked at this issue with the Klahoose FN, they did not want to participate in any way in a regulatory process.

Question - If I enhance mushroom growth, then does that create a different scenario from traditional use?

Question - Is there an opportunity for a parallel licensing model to that of fisheries? FN right & allocation, sport fishing, commercial fishing. Could the same approach be used for NTFRs?

Outcome of the discussion - There seemed to be some general support for a regulation, but it is a lower priority.

Stumpage

Question - A concern has been expressed that community forests are getting a lower price for their logs because of the tab rates? Responses from managers were as follows:

- Hard to judge, but I think we are getting good value from the “market”
- We are getting full value, but they play with the trucking side. Have to watch the haul differential
- We are getting full value, but I can't just say yes because we are constantly price takers because we are small
- Some majors tried but we didn't sell them the wood. So we get full value.
- Consensus of the group is that they are getting full value

Doug Stewart: As we have expanded the program, there is an issue with the Softwood Lumber Agreement (SLA) and tab rates. The lawyers tell us that there is a threshold to tab rates, but we don't know where it is exactly. To go from 1.7 to 3 million on tab rates will be difficult. No one has said to

revisit tab rates, but it is always in the background. There was something in the Liberal Platform around more revenue sharing with communities. They used examples around oil & gas.

Availability of Contractors

Don asked if this was an issue. It is an issue for their community forest because they have no logging contractors based out of Logan Lake.

- Wells Gray and Smithers do stump to dump and this seems to work well.
- Grant from Westbank CFA had advice about how to build up work to support a local logging contractor.
- A suggestion was made to organize logging for quarters when local contracts might not be busy.