

**British Columbia Community Forest Association  
Annual General Meeting May 31 2009**

President's Report  
Submitted by Robin Hood

During each BCCFA AGM, our members participate in a strategic planning session. The result is an evolving list of strategic priorities. The following report describes the Association's achievements on these priorities this past year. We are a grassroots, member driven organization. We thank each and every member community, as well as our associate members, for their support and contributions to our work.

The round bullets are taken from our strategic priorities document and the arrows describe our achievements.

***A. Core Operations***

**1. *Priority: Community Forest Agreement (CFA) Policy, Administration and Tenure –H***

- Roundtable on Forestry submission
- Bioenergy – carbon and relationship to tenure system. Get informed and stay abreast of the developments.
- Work with Community-based business forest sector alliance.
- Respond to emerging policy & regulatory changes.
- Effective communication with government, increase our profile to ensure we are included in consultative processes.
- Administrative streamlining:
  1. Cutting Permit (CP) admin & submissions for area-based tenures; province-wide service consistency (approvals); push for 1 CP (rationale is our tab rates & area-based tenure);
- Participate in Community Forest Program Joint Working Group - Ongoing policy discussions to recognize the unique nature of the CFA and the need to streamline costs and administrative burden
- Continue to support Probationary Period removal
- Pricing – maintain deal for CFAs, focus on coastal pricing
- Continue to document the benefits of CFAs
- Build the case against possible Softwood Lumber Agreement challenges – cost of stewardship and our cost per m3 (CFAs are the last vestige of the social contract with communities).

Roundtable on Forestry

- The BCCFA made a submission to the Roundtable of Forestry in August 2008. Our common messages were presented at Roundtable meetings around the province, and at a formal meeting between the BCCFA and the members of the Roundtable on September 11 2008 in Vancouver.
- At the request of the Roundtable, we produced a paper on our log sales, entitled Community Forest Log Sales and Non Timber Resource Values. We found that 73% of CFA wood had been sold to the majors, while 27% was going to other buyers including value added manufacturers.

- BCCFA Executive met with Minister Bell in Prince George in December to further discuss our submission.
- The recommendations of the Roundtable indicate that our message was heard. Recommendation Number 23 says: "We should expand the Community Forest Agreement Tenure program"

#### Community Forest Program Joint Working Group (CFP)

- A major milestone was achieved March 31 with the passing of Bill 13 in the BC legislature. The amendment to the *Forest Act* eliminates the probationary form of Community Forest Agreements, and creates provisions for existing PCFAs to transition into 25 year CFAs. Communities just coming into the program will go directly to a 25 year agreement. This significant change was the result of ongoing discussions between the Ministry of Forest and the BCCFA, through the Community Forest Program Joint Working Group.
- The Joint Working Group was established as a result of the CF Program Review completed in June 2007. The outcome of the Program Review was a list of recommendations with an associated workplan. The members of the working group include representatives of MOFR Tenures Branch in Victoria, the Ministry's CFA coordinators in all three Forest Regions, members of the BCCFA Executive and Staff.
- The CFP Joint Working Group continues to be the primary mechanism through which the BCCFA works to improve the Community Forest Program, and the conditions within which community forests operate.
- Bill 13 resulted in the removal of the mid-term assessment, representing a significant cost and time savings to PCFAs. It also necessitated a revised Community Forest Agreement application package as well as new a new licence document. BCCFA staff and board members worked long and hard this past year with MOFR staff to see these changes through.
- Through the Joint Working Group, we continue to make progress on the workplan, and we are now focusing on the topic of further administrative streamlining of CFAs, including a shift to single cutting permits.

#### Pricing

- Timber pricing for CFAs continues to be a top priority for the Association. CFAs have been under tabular rates since 2006, with the exception of a 4 month period in early 2007.
- This arrangement relieves CFAs from all cruising requirements, and provides an 85% rate reduction to the Interior Appraisal Manual Table 6.1 and a 70% reduction to the Average Sawlog Stumpage Rates for the Coast Forest Region.
- We continue to work with the Ministry of Forests & Range to improve the rates for the Coast.

#### Bioenergy

- With new government initiatives, the interest in bioenergy is growing. Some established community forests are moving forward. Their work will be a focus of discussions during this year's conference.

#### Forest Sector Alliance

- The BCCFA is part of the community-based business forest sector alliance, an informal group of provincial organizations with common interests. Through the alliance, BCCFA reps participated in an event at last year's UBCM organized by the Truck Loggers Association to promote community – based forest businesses. Our Executive Director and I attend the Federation of BC Woodlot Association's AGM, and we also had a booth at this year's TLA Convention in Vancouver, run by our Vice President.

## **2. Regional Meetings -H**

- Support to wanna-bes & new CFAs by operating CFAs
  - Grassroots input to BCCFA policy issues
  - Identification of opportunities (marketing etc)
  - Led by directors, face to face would be ideal, could be done by conference call or a mixture (staff could join by conference call)
  - Include First Nations
  - Coordinate outreach - Members to make phone call to neighbouring communities after the conference.
- The first regional official regional meetings are taking place at our conference this week.
- Informal get-togethers have occurred during the past year

## **3. Communication, Extension and Outreach – H**

- Support communities engaged in the application process.
  - As much as possible, focus on in-community support.
  - Website & Newsletter
  - Governance & administrative structures – understanding the differences, transparency, and freedom of information – investigate legal information disclosure requirement inherent in the different administrative structures. Seek researchers who could do an analysis for us.
  - Coordinate further Conflict Management training for regional level delivery. Sloan and Cathro to present 1-2 day workshops on a fee for service basis.
- We have provided ongoing support to communities in the application process.
- Our Manager of Communication and Extension visits communities to assist them with the application and start-up.
- There are ongoing website updates, as well as two newsletters produced annually.
- This activity is closely linked to many aspects of our core operations including policy development and Working Group activities
- There continues to be a high demand for a compilation of information on CFA governance and administrative structures, board and staff policy, consultation with the public, conflict of interest, hiring, etc
- Work on the annual conference begins in October with the board approval of a draft budget and signing of a contract with the host community. The conference continues to be an important event for networking and education.
- This spring we created an online survey to get grassroots input on our work.

## **4. First Nations Liaison - H**

- Build relationships in a culturally sensitive manner
- Present the BCCFA as a resource for First Nations
- Opportunity to take an active role in new FN CFAs.
- Make on the ground connections
- Work with BC FN Forestry Council (Gina Thomas, Extension) and FORREX
- Opportunity to include in regional groups.

- Following up on the success of the First Nations session at our conference in Sechelt last year, the BCCFA partnered with FORREX and the First Nations Forestry Council to host a 3 day gathering in January of 2009. It took place on the traditional land of the Ktunaxa, where we were welcomed by Kathryn Tenneese, Ktunaxa Kinbasket Treaty Council Chief Negotiator.
- We wish to express our gratitude to FORREX and the First Nations Forestry Council for their generous financial support for this gathering.
- The purpose of the collaboration was to create a forum for safe, respectful, two-way dialogue, and to build shared understanding and rapport. It was hoped that the collaborative efforts will contribute to the efforts of First Nations to meaningfully connect back to the land through community forestry.
- We are continuing this work through the First Nations session at this year's conference.
- We have also worked with the First Nations Forestry Council to draft a protocol agreement that supports a collaborative relationship.
- Overall we aim to build BCCFA capacity to effectively provide outreach and support services to First Nation communities engaged in community forestry, and to promote cooperation and build connections to meaningfully include First Nation voices and needs in the work of the BCCFA.

## 5. Organizational Development - HH

- Review board responsibilities & functions
  - Review and upgrade job description for contract staff
  - Review communication strategy
  - Create orientation package/manual for new board members (action: send electronically to all current directors)
  - Continue to increase membership base & enhance benefits to members
  - Continue to support getting non-member applicants & CFAs to the AGM & Conference.
  - Semi-annual newsletter – electronic and snail mail.
- We continue to grow and evolve as an organization.
  - Job descriptions were created for the BCCFA staff, outlining responsibilities and clear lines of communication.
  - The board changed staff titles to increase the professionalism of the Association. Coordinator changed to Executive Director. Extension Coordinator changed to Manager of Communication and Extension.
  - Membership has increased to 48 communities an increase of 7 since last year. Of the 52 communities actively involved in the CFA program, there are only 8 that have not yet joined the Association.
  - We have now published our third newsletter, “Connections”. The current issue is electronic due to the end of the special project funding that launched the program and current budgetary constraints.
  - In our budgeting, the board made the decision to set aside a reserve each year to create a nest egg for core operations.

## 6. Branding and Marketing - H

- Create workplan for branding and marketing (incl film project)
  - Fundraising coordination
  - Film & branding project
- Opening New Doors: Branding BC's Community Forests is the new project of the BCCFA.
  - “Opening New Doors” is the first step in identifying the unique characteristics of community forests in the marketplace. This project will help communities to diversify their community forest enterprises

by building their capacity to access high value specialty markets. Educational and cooperative marketing resources will be developed that communities can use to promote their products and enhance their business opportunities.

- The two main aspects of this project are the creation of a DVD, entitled “Community Forests”, and a community forest brand. The brand is a work in progress, and we hope that everyone had a chance to provide ideas to our new marketing consultant during the conference.
- This project is made possible through grants from Western Economic Diversification Canada / Community Economic Development Initiative; Northern Development Initiative Trust; Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust; Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition.
- We want to use this year’s conference to continue to discuss ideas on how the BCCFA can assist with marketing.

## **7. Forest Investment Account – H**

- It is in our interest to have all of the CFAs succeed and to have our allocation increased.
- Follow up with MOFR regarding the new funding allocation.
- The BCCFA is now in its 8<sup>th</sup> year administering the Forest Investment Account (FIA) for community forest agreement holders (CFAs). We’ve grown from an allocation of \$61,000 shared amongst five CFAs, to \$850,000 distributed amongst 34.
- In the 08/09 fiscal year, 24 CFAs participated in the program. Our original allocation was \$650,000, but we collectively increased it to \$818,685.16
- We have now entered our third year of the Land Based Investment Program, the part of FIA run by PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP.
- We are in the second year for a new allocation formula for community forest, based on a minimum of \$25,000 per licensee for a total of \$850,000 this coming year.
- CFAs have access to the full list of eligible activities.
- CFAs retain the right to reallocate funds amongst themselves, coordinated by the BCCFA.

## **8. Priority: Forest Safety - M**

- Worksafe BC categories – get the clear story
- Participate in BC – FSC Board of Directors
- Keep pushing for lower costs and reduction of the administrative burden.
- Clarification of responsibilities and due diligence guidelines of CFAs for visitors, NTFP liability
- The BCCFA is represented on the Forest Safety Council board of directors by a BCCFA director. Through this representation, we attend Council meetings and ensure that the unique community forest perspective is included in the discussions.
- According to our recent members survey, 37 % of respondents are Forest Safety Council Certified, 25% are registered, 29% waiting until certification becomes mandatory, and 8% are covered through their management consultant. It is clear that the large operations got up to speed quickly, jumped on board SAFE Companies and ran with it. For the smaller organizations, it has been harder to meet the burden of paper work and the cost of certification.
- There remain a number of concerns about the administrative burden and registration categories.

## 9. Wood Product Development - M

- Initiate discussions with FP Innovations for a CFA program.
- BCCFA staff members have been seeking funds for the past year to support a wood product development project. It has been very difficult as we find ourselves the square peg in a round hole.
- Recently, Minister of Forests and Range Pat Bell indicated that the new Value for Wood Secretariat may be the answer to diversifying markets and adding value to community forest logs. We are working with Peter Fuglem, the Executive Director of Wood First to ensure that community forests have meaningful access to the benefits of this program.

## 10. Non Timber Forest Resources

- Participate in policy actions - Still many unanswered questions.
- NTFR Assessment Guide
- The BCCFA board has agreed to shift the focus of any discussions on NTFR development to the First Nations dialogue sessions.
- The NTFR Assessment Guide has been posted on the BCCFA website and is available to members only.
- We provided support to the District of 100 Mile House for resolution to the Union of BC Municipalities. The resolution calls on the UBCM to lobby the Provincial Government to enable CFAs to retain the carbon sequestering and carbon credits accrued.

## 11. Certification - L

- Monitor policy climate, market demand and member interest.
- The world of certification is changing rapidly. Increasing demands for FSC certified wood and pulp are creating new opportunities in the marketplace. The advantage for CFAs in certification is primarily market share and long term supply. However costs of certification remain high for individual CFAs. Interest in group certification is growing.

## B. Special Projects

### 12. *Strengthening Community Forests Project*

- We successfully completed the Strengthening Community Forests Project. Funded by the Vancouver Foundation, FORREX and CEDTaP, we have been able to provide ongoing support to communities in the application process. Susan spent many hours answering questions and pointing people in the right direction.
- To enhance this service, Susan and I (Robin Hood) went on two road trips, visiting the BC interior and Vancouver Island to provide outreach and support services to 18 communities in the CFA application process.

### 13. *FORREX – Forest Research and Extension Working Group*

- BCCFA Executive Director continues to represent the BCCFA in the FORREX Socio-Economic Working Group. The working group brings together researchers, policy makers and resource managers from all over BC to discuss the role of Social Science in forest management, and to provide

strategic direction to FORREX. In the past year, the focus on the group has been to oversee the creation of curriculum materials on public participation in resource management.

#### ***14. CFA Research***

- Simon Fraser University research project will assess the contributions that community forests make to forest management ecologically, economically, culturally, and institutionally, and viewing them as a potential future alternative to current arrangements. Several of our members are participating in this research.