

RESTORING BC's FOREST LEGACY AND ENERGIZING THE FOREST SECTOR

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The growing concern about the future of BC forests in meeting the long-term societal expectations from a wide range of concerned citizens initiated the *Healthy Forests-Healthy Communities: A conversation on BC forests* initiative (HFHC)¹. The final report and recommendations are based on a forest management and associated land use dialogue with communities, experts and concerned citizens across BC over a two year period. The intent was to inform politicians of recommended strategic actions necessary to ensure the future forest will restore the BC forest legacy and energize the forest sector. Failure to manage forest lands through a long-term sustainability lens will result in a reduction in both investment and management of the forest asset leading to unacceptable levels of community economic development, family health and BC revenue. BC needs to change their focus to avoid a future crisis!

Many communities feel both left out of forest management decision-making and disappointed Government does not expedite delivery of commitments. This has generated a sense of frustration and helplessness in getting Government to listen and act. Government needs to reverse this situation and bring back community enthusiasm regarding BC forests and reap the associated benefits.

Communities, experts and concerned citizens have said they want a change in focus. It should be long-term stewardship and away from the current emphasis on short-term economics. In addition, communities need to have more say in the future of their local forest lands.

A series of 13 nested recommendations are presented, to be delivered over 10 years, as a *Strategic Action Plan* implemented in two phases (0-5 years; 5-10 years). They are directed to investing in the forest asset through actions regarding long-term stewardship and community involvement, including:

¹ A non-partisan, volunteer supported initiative to provide an opportunity for communities and concerned citizens to inform decision-makers of their views and concerns regarding the management of BC forest lands

Long-term stewardship

- Legislated principles, vision and goals to guide BC forest lands decision-making
- Reliable and trustworthy forest resources inventories to base decisions upon
- Protecting forests from wildfire, insects and disease, regenerating disturbed or harvested lands and increasing forest productivity to move towards creating healthy forests
- Adequate and trusted information on the condition of the forest
- A stable forest lands research program to fill knowledge gaps relative to minimizing current and future stresses on BC forests

Community involvement

- Providing resources and laws for communities to develop local forest visions to guide decision-making
- Establishing policies that generate real influence by communities in local forest decision-making
- Establishing a Government emphasis on community economic diversification
- Establishing policies to integrate community needs with local forest management and land use decisions

The full report is available on the HFHC website. <http://bcforestconversation.com>