healthy **FORESTS**
healthy **COMMUNITIES**

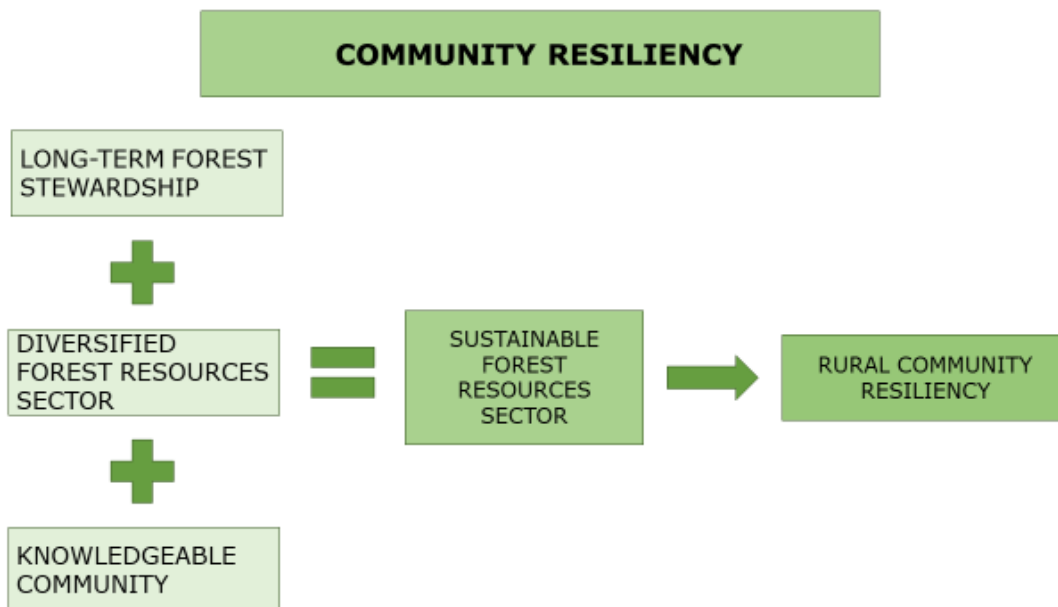# MOVING TOWARD COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

Specific Strategic Actions

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CURRENT SITUATION

The current state of movement toward Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal community resiliency from the perspective of the local forest resources as described through progress on implementing the recommendations from the *Healthy Forests-Healthy Communities* Initiative dialogue is presented in the update report (https://tinyurl.com/ybwsqulb). Arising from this assessment were five (5) relative political priority action recommendations (https://tinyurl.com/y7hpdfb7)**.** Implementing these recommendations as outline below will contribute greatly to the Government desire to build "…a strong, sustainable, innovative economy." This paper identifies the strategic priority actions to deliver on these five (5) recommendations.

> **Community resilience** is the capability to anticipate risk, limit impact, and bounce back rapidly through survival, adaptability, evolution, and growth in the face of turbulent change. Ref: *Community & Regional Resilience Institute, 2013.*

The forest sector has a major influence on building resiliency in 140 BC rural communities. There are three (3) factors, when combined, lead to a sustainable local forest resources sector contributing to community resiliency as shown below.

Healthy Forests-Healthy Communities: A conversation on BC forests
Web: http://bcforestconversation.com   Email: info@bcforestconversation.com

STRATEGIC PRIORIY ACTIONS

The recommended strategic priority actions for each of the three (3) major rural community resiliency factors are presented below. It should be recognized that work to some extent is on-going within Government on one or more of these but as outlined in the update report but a lot more is needed. The urgency of Government in resolving the issue(s) is in question.

1.0   Long-term forest stewardship

Long-term forest stewardship is a critical factor for rural communities achieving resiliency. There are three (3) priority recommended actions to demonstrate how well BC is moving toward Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) using long-term forest stewardship practices. These are:

1) Adopt legally binding provincial resource management and extraction principles and a forest lands vision and associated goals,
2) Establish Government leadership to support and encourage forest dependent communities in developing a vision and goals for their local forests and expect forest managers to reflect them in forest management plans, and
3) Require forest managers to develop management unit plans that demonstrate they will deliver the expectations from the provincial and community visions and goals.

These are discussed and recommended strategic actions provided in SFM-what needs to be done to demonstrate status as part of the implementation of a strategic planning framework depicted below.

STRATEGIC FOREST PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Land use plan information is fundamental to the preparation of a Strategic Plan. Although BC has been a leader in land use planning, this has fallen off over the last 15 years due to the decision by Government to discontinue monitoring the implementation and updating of the plans. Land use planning is not a single event as professed by the Government but an on-going process that changes with land based conditions (e.g., Mountain Pine Beetle epidemic, wildfires, etc.), new information (e.g., climate change research) and social values. The emergence of First Nations land use plans since 2001 has resulted in confusion among forest managers and others regarding what plan should provide the foundation for developing a strategic forest management plan. BC has not synchronized the Provincial and First Nations land use plans and there is no appetite to "re-open" the Provincial land use plans and First Nations are usually strongly committed to their plans. A proposed process to move forward on providing clarity regarding land use plans is discussed in https://tinyurl.com/yaenj3rv. Cooperation and collaboration between the Province, First Nations, forest companies and communities is essential to modernize and update existing land use plans.

It is recognized implementation of this process would be a challenge but the potential benefits are significant from the standpoint of moving toward community resiliency and long-term forest stewardship for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal communities.

Communities are entitled to have a say in land use and forest management. A mechanism is needed to provide meaningful community engagement on a continuous basis with decision-makers regarding their views, concerns and current and future needs relative to local forests. This begins with the community developing vision and goals statements for the local forest. This, and the mechanism to influence the management unit strategic plan, are discussed in https://tinyurl.com/mzrgmlh.

Forest managers operate in an imperfect environment. Consequently, the **principles of monitoring and adaptive management are essential** if assurances regarding moving toward long-term forest stewardship are to be provided. This needs to be a fundamental principle of evaluating progress.

Unfortunately, Government has significantly reduced its capacity for **monitoring compliance and enforcement** over the last 15 years, most of it in 2001. BCGEU (unpublished data) reports a decline of 75% in MFLNRO inspections (2000-2012) due to lack of staff and a drop of 18% in MFLNRO staffing over the 2007-2017 period. Although MFLNRO responded to this issue by increasing compliance and enforcement staffing in 2013, it has not reached 2001 levels. The level of compliance and enforcement by MFLNRO staffing continues to come under question by both the Forest Practices Board (FPB) (https://tinyurl.com/ycffjqsc) and the BC Ombudsman (https://tinyurl.com/y7dunjap), in 2014 reports. These inadequacies need to be corrected through ensuring sufficient compliance and enforcement staff are available to monitor forest practices, if long-term forest stewardship is to be demonstrated and community support granted.

Monitoring and adaptive management has to be integrated with **forest resources research**. Currently, there are deficiencies in the existing MFLNRO forest resources research and a new model is required, as discussed in https://tinyurl.com/y9w6sfod.

The **Professional Reliance concept** was introduced with the Forest and Range Practices Act (FRPA) in 2004 to give more responsibility for forest decisions to mainly non-governmental forest professionals. The FPB studied how this has worked in the FPB Board Bulletin 014-professional reliance. One key conclusion was "Professional reliance appears to be meeting its intent where resource management objectives and priorities are clearly defined at appropriate scales and best management practices are either well known or required in law. Where objectives are not clear, or where competing interests and values are in play, it is not realistic to expect professionals working for licensees to define the public interest." If this tool is to continue to be used, this issue will have to be corrected by Government. Creating an environment for forest managers where their decisions are guided by a legally binding set of principles, vision and goals, an officially accepted land use plan and a community local forest vision, together, would go a long way to addressing the issue identified by the FPB.

2.0 Diversified forest resources sector

A sustainable and diversified regional forest sector, composed of one or more of the following forest resources products depending on the community vision and forest conditions, is required.

Potential Regional Business Opportunities Model
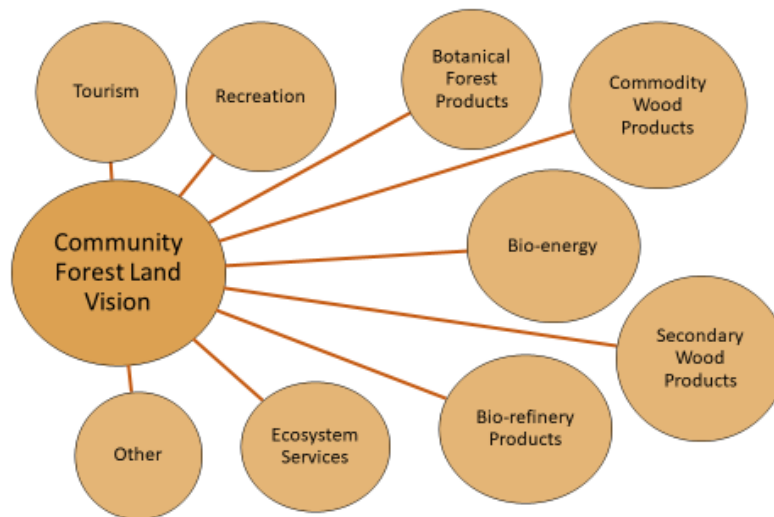
NOT ALL BUSINESSES EXPECTED IN EACH REGION

A community vision and goals for the local forest is a fundamental building block for a community diversified forest resources sector (https://tinyurl.com/mzrgmlh). If BC is to make progress in moving to community resiliency, Government must demonstrate leadership in supporting and encouraging forest dependent communities to develop a vision and goals for their local forests and expect forest managers to reflect them in forest management plans. It is anticipated a clear and diversified regional forest sector will increase well-paying jobs through increased investment.

Communities, through UBCM resolutions based on a survey of their members, identified a need for influence of forest management decision-making in their local forests. Outcomes of the Government-UBCM discussions regarding how this recommendation could be accommodated are yet to be outlined. An improvement in this regard is essential if communities are to influence decision-making on issues necessary to move toward resiliency.

The **priority barriers to increasing secondary wood manufacturing** and thereby increasing well-paying jobs and community resiliency are outlined in the shortcomings identified in the update report (https://tinyurl.com/ybwsqulb). However, two (2) immediate opportunities to diversify the regional forest sector are associated with using the "regional cluster model." First is a challenge before Government to deliver, in real terms, a commitment to increase the secondary wood manufacturing sector and thereby, well-paying jobs. The cluster model has been proven in many situations within the forest sector and in other sectors. This opportunity is discussed and the challenges before Government identified in Building through clusters.

> **An industry cluster** is a group of firms and institutions located in close proximity whose businesses are interlinked through value and supply chains, labor, and use of similar inputs, technology, and complementary products. Ref: *The status of and opportunities for business clustering within the forest products sector in the US, US Endowment of Forestry and Communities, 2009, 27p.*

A second challenge is Government to address the Logging residue-opportunities lost issue that would involve new business types, full utilization of forest fibre, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and improved ecosystem management, together contributing to climate change mitigation and job creation. This opportunity lends itself very well to using the "regional cluster model."

3.0 Knowledgeable community

Communities have identified the need for **building forestry related knowledge and understanding** as an issue to position themselves in influencing forest lands decisions and generating a forest culture within communities (http://bcforestconversation.com/restoring-bcs-forest-legacy/). Citizens concerned about the future of BC's forests have asked for more information on forests, forest management, land use and the forest industry.

Knowledge capacity building occurs at both the student and adult levels. It comes in various forms as outlined in the Capacity building framework and delivered in part by Provincial and local Governments, forest industry, NGOs and academic institutions across BC. There are over 30 organizations who focus on providing K-12 student forest education. Also, organizations are working to build knowledge capacity in adults. These are all underfunded, especially relative to NGO programs. Government and industry need to adequately support these organizations who are predominately not-for-profit, a major asset for the Province and the forest industry and providing a service for them. This knowledge will assist communities in providing informed input over the short and long-term into processes and decisions regarding issues leading to community resiliency.