

**Development of the Community Forest Tenure in British Columbia:  
An Examination of the BCMoF Community Forestry Initiative**

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## INTRODUCTION

In July of 1998, the British Columbia Provincial Legislature passed *Bill 34: Forest Statutes Amendment Act, 1988*. Among the amendments made in this bill was the incorporation of a new form of forest tenure, community forestry. The development of this new tenure, the subsequent pilot projects, the anticipated refinement of the structure of the tenure and its general applicability are collectively referred to as the Community Forestry Initiative (CFI). Although this development in tenure reform is recent, the notion of community forestry is not new to British Columbia (BC); indeed, community forestry was addressed and endorsed in the 1945 Sloan Commission on the forest resources of BC. It can be generally stated that forest policy developments in BC are gradual, and as Wilson states in his study of wilderness politics in BC, “[n]ew ways of thinking generally come to the fore only after long gestation periods” (1998, p. 13); such is the case for community forestry.

Currently, there are three community forests in operation in BC: the Revelstoke Community Forest and the Mission Municipal Forest, both of which are tenured as Tree Farm Licenses (TFL); and the North Cowichian Municipal Forest, which operates on municipal lands (there are also the seven community forests in the initial stages of development that are being piloted under the CFI). This raises the question, “if community forests can exist under the current tenure system, why is there a need for a new tenure”? This question will be discussed in the context of forest policy development through the application of the policy regime framework. The answer to this question will address how the idea of community forestry gained prevalence in the British Columbia Ministry of Forests (BCMoF), and why community forestry is deemed important to timber dependant communities in BC. The application of the Policy Regime Framework (Hoberg, 1997) will assist in this assessment.

## BACKGROUND TO COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN BC

Community forestry is not new to BC, neither in concept nor in practice. The 1945 Sloan Commission on the forest resources of BC suggested that a sustained-yield timber program would favor the development and stability of timber-dependent communities, and lend itself to the continuous support of rural communities (Sloan, 1945). Commissioner Sloan suggested

that communities near areas of reverted lands could manage these lands on a sustained-yield basis as public working circles (sustained-yield units). The Commissioner further stated that,

[t]hese community forests, apart from timber production therefrom, have proven to be of considerable value in the United States as a means of acquainting the public with the benefits to be secured from the practice of sustained-yield forestry.... (Sloan, 1945, p. 147).

The second Sloan Commission in 1956, in response to a presentation from the Canadian Institute of Forestry, judged community management of TFLs as an appropriate practice (Sloan, 1956; Allan & Frank, 1994).

In its 1976 report, the Royal Commission on Forest Resources recognized that there was a significant increase in demand for small-scale forestry in BC, which was partly a result of an increased concern for environmental issues and an increased interest in rural living. Two other factors identified as contributing to the demand for small-scale forestry were “anxieties over new, large scale forms of industrial logging operations; and a reaction against the centralization and consolidation of control over resource rights and forestry operations” (Pearse, 1976, p. 190). To address these concerns, Pearse suggested that the practice of small-scale forestry and timber management could enhance the productivity of fragmented Crown and private lands. Pearse also held that small-scale forestry may be more efficient than commercial-scale forestry in the utilization of forested lands, meeting community needs, and allowing for stable employment. It was suggested that commercial-scale forestry could hinder the involvement of local residents in community initiated forestry activities, such as community forestry. However, Pearse also recognized that economies of scale could be a factor that would make it difficult for small forestry operations to compete in the timber market. While recommending systematic provisions for increasing public participation in forest management, Pearse’s recommendations were more concerned with revising the wood-lot program to include a local residence qualification than with addressing community forestry.

Presently in BC, there are three operational community forests, two of which hold TFL agreements. The North Cowichian Forest Reserve, created on municipal lands in 1948, is managed as a community forest. In 1948 the Mission Municipal Forest Reserve was established on municipal land to be managed as a community forest; these municipal holdings were augmented by the award of TFL #26 in 1958 (Allan & Frank, 1994). The largest community forest in operation in BC is managed by the Revelstoke Community Forest

Corporation for the city of Revelstoke. This community forest is on Crown land, and encompasses TFL # 56, which was awarded in 1993 (Revelstoke Community Forest Corporation, 1995). The granting of this TFL was consistent with the 1991 Forest Resources Commission recommendation that the reallocation of timber rights (to be taken from existing licensees) to smaller, area-based tenures could be held by communities or First Nations. Concurrent with this commission was a provincial election, during which the New Democratic Party (NDP) election platform included a provision for increased community control of local forested lands (Wilson, 1998). The NDP would win the election and form the government. In the years leading to the development of the community forest tenure by the BCMoF there was significant interest from BC communities in the pursuit of some form of community-based forest management arrangement. Burda, *et al.* (1997) identified eight communities (including the Gitksan First Nation) that were proposing some form of community-based ecosystem management of forested lands near their communities. The BCMoF acknowledged that 35 communities had expressed interest in establishing community forests in the years preceding the CFI announcement (BCMoF, 1998a). This interest from communities may have been a factor in the decision to incorporate community forestry within the management considerations of the BCMoF.

The CFI had its genesis in the Jobs and Timber Accord (JTA) which was announced in June of 1997. The JTA sought to bring Government and industry together to create 37 000 long-term jobs (both direct and indirect) throughout the forest sector by 2001 (BCMoF, 1997a). Glen Clark, then Premier of BC, stated that "...public forest lands belong to the people of British Columbia, and they have a right to expect more jobs and other social benefits from every tree cut on public lands" (BCMoF, n.d.a).

One factor that was identified as being important to the general principles of the JTA was the opportunity to secure investments that would foster an increase in the growth, yield, and value of available timber in BC (BCMoF, n.d.b). One method of pursuing these opportunities was the design of innovative forestry practices agreements. Pursuant the development of these agreements, the JTA stated that,

[t]he Government will design and pilot at least three community forest tenures, where AAC [annual allowable cut] is available, to allow resource communities and First Nations (including through joint ventures) to participate directly in managing the forest to create sustainable employment. (BCMoF, n.d.b)

This AAC would likely come from the 10% claw back that the BCMoF has traditionally applied to the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program, a form of tenure that allows individuals and corporations to buy timber at a competitive price from the BCMoF (BCMoF, 1994). The 10% claw back is facilitated through the acquisition of lands as a result the sale or transfer of TFLs or Timber Supply Areas (TSAs).

At the announcement of the CFI, the BCMoF claimed that the initiative would fulfill a government commitment to investigate alternative methods of managing BC's forests while increasing community involvement. Former Forests Minister David Zirnhelt claimed that "[w]e want to look at ways for communities and First Nations to participate directly in local forest management and create sustainable jobs" (BCMoF, 1997b). The minister did note that the opportunities for community forest tenures would be limited, and that communities would be encouraged to explore other forest management options (*ibid.*).

What sets community forestry apart from other forms of public participation in natural resource decision-making, is that it is not simply government consulting communities about the direction of management decisions. Public consultation about forest management decisions does not satisfy community expectations or demands for inclusion into the decision-making arena (Duniker *et al.*, 1994). In the consultation process, public preferences are solicited for consideration, though decision-makers are not obligated to address the preferences. A reason suggested for public involvement in forest management is that resource management goals ought to be developed by the owners of the resource; in the case of Crown land, the owners are the public. Management decisions require localized knowledge of the area of forest being administered. This local knowledge of forested landscapes can serve to inform or supplement the knowledge of professional foresters. Local citizens, through their connections with their immediate surroundings, can assist by bringing attention to issues, concerns, and special places that are important and meaningful to communities. Tanz and Howard (1991) suggest that local citizens can make reasonable decisions about land use, though their success in doing so depends on the level of their commitment. Community forestry can empower communities and their citizens; consultation does not.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BC COMMUNITY FOREST TENURE

The BCMoF, in asking communities to actively develop and manage for non-timber values and products, was seeking a balance between timber extraction and other activities that might take place in tenured-forested lands held by communities (BCMoF, n.d.c). However, the BCMoF also recognized that the possibility exists that communities may develop one activity at the expense of the other; to address this, the BCMoF stated that "...community forests are not intended to be used as vehicles solely for the purpose of forest protection or as vehicles solely for timber extraction" (BCMoF, n.d.c). Within this context, Gail Brewer, a Strategic Policy Forester with the BCMoF, offered a description of the community forest tenure. The tenure will have: a renewable lease which may be as long as 99 years; no cut control; no appurtenancy requirement; a schedule of annual rents that will be unique to individual community agreements; and the opportunity to grant rights beyond timber harvesting – non-timber values are to be managed in the tenure (Brewer, October 8, 1998).

By offering leases that may be of 99 years in duration (and this will be dependant on a probationary period and suitability of management practices), the community forest tenure provides some sense of stability to the community. The increased time period for these tenures is important, as it covers the average period of one commercial timber rotation, which is about 80 years (Mitchell-Banks, 1998). A longer lease might provide the necessary incentive for communities to make silvicultural investments that could maximize timber production. If nothing else, the time-period allows communities to develop long range business and management plans, that could allow for consistency and continuity in management practices, and provide for long-term community stability.

As there will be no cut control applied to the community forest tenure, communities may be better able to operate in periods of timber market downturn. There will be no minimum or maximum volume set for timber extraction, provided it does not exceed the AAC determined for the tenure; thus, communities are not compelled to conduct timber operations when timber markets are in decline.

An appurtenancy clause or requirement has traditionally been a part of timber tenures in BC in order to foster community stability and employment. This clause has required licensees to construct and operate a saw or pulp mill in the area in which timber harvesting operations are

taking place. A possible consequence of appurtenancy is that harvesting levels are high in order to provide mills with enough timber so that they could operate efficiently. As communities will not be bound by an appurtenancy requirement, they will be free to find the best price for their timber at a mill of their choosing; this also limits the start-up costs that would be borne by communities.

Initially, the BCMoF encouraged communities to develop innovative means of assessing and paying annual rents or 'stumpage'. In other words, royalties paid by communities to the province could be negotiated with individual communities, and annual rents could be unique to individual agreements. This flexibility was deemed necessary, as management plans and levels of timber harvest of community forests can vary widely among communities. It also recognized that timber extraction would not be the only activity being pursued and managed for, and that the valuation of non-timber values and products may be included in the determination of annual rents. However, the BCMoF reassessed this position. Two reasons may account for this reversal: the innovative means for annual rent payments that communities devised were not acceptable; or the BCMoF, already considering the issue of stumpage reform, felt that the granting of such innovative rental agreements would be a slippery slope that could mire the Ministry in negotiations with other licensees who believed that they could make a case for similar considerations.

The community forest license grants rights beyond timber harvesting – non-timber values and products must be actively managed for within the tenures. This added responsibility allows communities to diversify their operations to varying degrees, and could serve to buffer the effects of a timber market downturn; it also permits communities to manage for community values that may be at odds with commercial timber harvesting. This provision is essential to the success of community forests, as it encourages a wide range of forest users to participate in the management of forested lands, and allows for a variety of opinions to be voiced and considered. Management objectives and management consequences may be more readily voiced and agreed upon through a wide level of community participation. These agreements could reduce the level of conflict that may arise due to management decisions not satisfying all forest users (Brooks & Grant, 1992).

The experiences of the seven pilot projects that were announced in the summer of 1999 (*i.e.* the Esketemc First Nation, the Harrop-Procter Watershed Protection Society, the District of Fort St.

James, the Village of Burns Lake, the Bamfield/Huu-ay-aht Community Forest Society, the Islands Community Stability Initiative, and the North Island Woodlot), will assist in the refinement of the community forest tenure, and provide the BCMoF with feedback from the chosen communities before the tenure is made widely available. The FPC, the regulatory structure that dictates how timber operations can be carried out in BC will be evenly applied to the pilot projects and any subsequent community forests. The existing community forests in BC (in Revelstoke, Mission, and North Cowichian) will not be affected by the new tenure unless they choose to submit proposals to the BCMoF, which they have not done to date.

## **POLICY REGIME FRAMEWORK**

The Policy Regime Framework is composed of three constituent parts: regime components, background conditions, and policy outcome. Within this framework, the regime components, in the context of the background conditions, shape the policy outcome (Hoberg, 1997). Though not strictly adhered to, this framework has guided the following contents of this paper.

### **REGIME COMPONENTS**

Regime components consist of actors (who in turn have interests, resources, and strategies), institutions (which structure authority, jurisdiction, and relations among government actors), and ideas (which may represent causal or normative beliefs). Hoberg (1997) notes that the institution component may affect the resources and strategies of some actors.

#### **Actors**

Actors in BC forest policy have traditionally included industry, environmentalists, and government; in the context of the development of the community forest tenure, communities and their members are also relevant actors.

The primary interest of government and politicians is re-election, and two issues in the realm of BC forest policy would demand attention and settlement if the NDP Government were to prove their mettle. The forest sector, traditionally a keystone of the BC economy, had come under attack from international markets and the court of public opinion; government action was necessary to address these concerns in a manner which would benefit the economy and bolster

BC timber companies. The second issue, closely related to the first, was that the number of timber jobs were declining; government action was necessary to determine how to assist timber-dependent communities reestablish economic stability. The development of a community forestry tenure may assist the government on both counts if we accept Hoberg's hypothesis on the institutional effects of the decentralization of forest policy:

in the case of forest policy, there is good reason to believe that, in general, the more decentralized the jurisdiction, the less preservationist you would expect the policy outcomes to be. (1997, p. 12).

Decentralization of forest management jurisdiction to the community level would help to diffuse the attack on BC forest practices from environmental groups (who feel that they are too lax) and from industry (who feel the practices are too constraining). The matter of how preservationist community forests may be under the CFI has yet to be played out; but if we were to use the examples of two long standing community forests in BC, Mission and North Cowichian, the hypothesis is not necessarily true. Further to this, Wilson (1998), in his study of wilderness politics in BC, suggests that the more radical environmentalist ideas have had their genesis in rural areas.

The process of decentralization of forest policy in BC had started in 1992 with the Commission on Resources and Environment (CORE) under the Social Credit Party, and continued under the NDP with the development of Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs). In both cases, with varying degrees of success, the Provincial Government had attempted to shift the venue of forest management to the regional level. By creating opportunities for communities to become land managers under the CFI, the Government may have succeeded in the highest level of decentralization of forest management jurisdiction available to them, barring the privatization of Crown land. This decentralization could result in interesting consequences: it could serve to diffuse critics' attacks on industry, as communities would be managing local forested landscapes for local benefits; additionally, community forestry may put a 'human face' on forestry.

The forest industry's interests are primarily related to generating profits for shareholders. This could be accomplished by resisting environmental regulations (although this is increasingly dependant on market forces), and maintaining the status quo concerning forest policy. Industry may be wary of shifting the jurisdiction of forest planning to the community level, as it might

compromise 'business as usual'. However, community forestry may give the forest industry an opportunity to focus on the processing stage of lumber and pulp production, an area where control may be more easily asserted.

The forest industry in BC has many resources on its side, perhaps chief among them is what Wilson calls a 'structural advantage', due to the economic importance of timber harvesting for BC. This advantage allows industry access to government that is not accorded to other groups. Related to the forest industry's economic position is their contribution to provincial employment, particularly in rural communities. This contribution bolsters the industry's position in BC in two ways: first, job creation opportunities supports wealth generation throughout the province and affects consumer spending to a certain extent. Secondly, it creates a group, or block of voters, who have a personal stake in forest policy and generally support industry's positions. The forest industry also has the financial resources to effectively lobby the provincial government, while addressing public concerns about forest practices through wide spread advertising campaigns (Wilson, 1998).

Don Wright, Director of Forestry, Environment, and Corporate Affairs with Weldwood of Canada, has suggested that "[a] role for forest-based communities managing a significant share of the forest land in BC is inevitable" (1998, p. 16). Wright concludes that the decentralization of forest management may be necessary to address community stability. The Council of Forest Industries (COFI), while not being ardent in their position, have supported the CFI. COFI endorses forging relationships between the public and industry, and community forestry may be one way of facilitating this (MacDonald, 1998). However, one does get the sense that COFI is seeking to maintain an industry presence in all aspects of forestry, and does not want to be shut out of the development of a new tenure.

David Haley (1998), a member of the BC CFI Advisory Committee, suggests that the forest industry in BC, in reaction to increased environmental pressure for better forest practices and the consequent bearing of market pressures, may want get out of timber management altogether and instead focus their interests and resources on log buying and timber processing. Community forestry may offer the opportunity for industrial licensees to walk away from tenures that they deem to be unproductive or controversial under the guise of contributing to community stability. Such an action would alleviate the pressures from environmental groups on industry

for better forest practices, as communities would develop management plans for tenured areas, not industry. This raises the question, how would environmentalists target communities? Communities' interest in community development (Duniker *et al.*, 1991), and the maintenance of financial stability and consistent employment levels has led them to embrace some industry positions; “[b]y the mid-1990s, forest workers and spokespersons for forest-dependant communities had become powerful and aggressive advocates of industry positions on a range of issues” (Wilson, 1998, p. 42). Many BC communities felt that one way to achieve stability was to seek self-determination in order that they have the opportunity to take part in forest policy decisions that affect them; community forestry is a means of achieving this. Community forestry offers an opportunity for community economic stability. Industrial forestry operations change their locations of harvest as timber sources dwindle. Community forestry allows for *shifting forestry* (and in BC, with the absence of an appurtenancy requirement for community forests, this may be especially true) whereby a constant (albeit lower) volume of timber harvest can be sustained in perpetuity (Duniker *et al.*, 1991). This potential for a constant level of available volume would lend itself to constant levels of timber-related activity, which are conditions that are favourable to timber-operation contractors and forest workers.

In 1993, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) adopted a strategy that sought to ensure the sustainability of resource dependant communities. Among the principles that were included in this strategy was an endorsement for increased community involvement in forest management; “we were calling for community forests” (Lornie, 1998). The UBCM also believed that the CFI would offer community stability through economic diversification. The assertion by Tom McCrae (1988), former mayor of Tahsis on the west coast of Vancouver Island, to control timber fiber is to control community destiny. This position is supported by many communities in the UBCM.

The seven communities that have been awarded community forestry pilot projects may be in the best position to test McCrae's claim. If nothing else, these communities' approaches and efforts to manage forest landscapes will be closely watched and evaluated by the other actors involved with BC forest policy. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the pilot project communities and their locations in the province.

Community forestry also offers communities opportunities to diversify their economy through non-timber extraction activities. These activities could include the encouragement of value

added timber manufacturing, and the marketing and sale of botanical products such as salal, mushrooms, or ginseng, and the development and promotion of wilderness recreation opportunities in the area.

Table 1. Community forest pilot project characteristics.

	<b>Proponent</b>	<b>Administrative Model</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
Cariboo Forest Region	Esketemc First Nation	First Nation	Near Alkali Lake (50 km south of Williams Lake)	15 000 ha Crown Land; 2 500 ha reserve land	Includes Indian reserve land.
Nelson Forest Region	Harrop-Procter Watershed Protection Society	Society	Near Harrop and Procter, 30 km northeast of Nelson	10 600 ha	Applying “ecosystem based” forestry and pursuing forest product environmental certification.
Prince George Forest Region	The District of Fort St. James	Municipality	Near Fort St. James	3 583 ha	Value-added objective.
Prince Rupert Forest Region	Village of Burns Lake	Corporation	Near Burns Lake	19 862 ha	Applying small-scale harvesting; Innovative forestry practices; and partnership with schools and training facilities.
Vancouver Forest Region	Bamfield/Huu-ay-aht Community Forest Society	Society, joint venture with First Nation	Near Bamfield and Ana’cla	418 ha	Partnership with schools and training facilities.
	Islands Community Stability Initiative	Society, joint venture with First Nation	Tlell watershed of Haida Gwaii, Queen Charlotte Islands	20 000 ha	Pursuing forest product environmental certification.
	North Island Woodlot	Corporation	Comox Valley	715 ha	Includes private land; applying small-scale harvesting; and innovative forestry practices.

(Adapted from BCMoF1999a; additional information from BCMoF 1999b; 1999c; 1999d).

The promotion of outdoor recreation and tourism could serve to benefit local businesses in communities, as increased visitor traffic would augment local consumer spending. Visitors to communities may require accommodation, food, and entertainment – existing businesses could benefit from an increased market. The early 1990s saw the growth of ‘share groups’, such as *Share our Resources* and *Share our Forests*. These groups, which promoted themselves as grassroots organizations, sought to balance forestry-based employment with other uses such as outdoor recreation. While these groups appealed for the multiple use of forests, they were in fact supported by the timber industry (Wilson, 1998).

Increased public awareness and interest in forest management can be a result of community forestry, as many communities could incorporate an educational component into their management plans (e.g. North Cowichian). This opportunity for education, and meaningful involvement on management decision-making produces public satisfaction (Duniker *et al.*, 1991) which could translate into support for the government that made the opportunity possible.

Timber-dependant communities carry a good deal of political weight, as the electoral constituencies have favoured rural areas (Wilson, 1998). This fact, when coupled with lobbying efforts of individual communities and the UBCM, gives timber-dependant communities political advantage when negotiating with the provincial government. Indeed, the clout of communities could increase with the granting of community forest tenures, as community forests could allow communities to have leverage over timber companies (Wright, 1988).

The role of environmentalists and ecologists in the community forestry debate is difficult to gauge. Wilderness protection concerns, and preservation of ecological diversity, the respective goals of these groups, will continue to have roles in the new community forest tenure. However, as suggested earlier, it is expected that communities will manage their tenured lands in a manner that is both long-term, and ecologically and economically sustainable, though many communities may need outside expertise to achieve these objectives.

Broad sections of society support environmental groups, and are cognizant of ecological principles. The success of environmental groups in mobilizing international timber markets against the logging of old growth, and in pushing for *green* certification of timber products and management practices is evidence of the support and weight these groups carry. The diversity of approaches environmental groups use in their campaigns allows them to reach out to a

broader audience, and tailor to their campaigns to their issues. The results of these campaigns have been successful in courting public opinion, and have achieved varying degrees of positive media attention. Environmental groups seem to be on side with communities, though they appear to be taking a wait and see approach to community forestry.

### **Institutions**

The forestry sector in BC is regulated by a number of agencies and regulations. The BCMoF is governed by a number of provincial acts, though only the principal statutes will be addressed. *The Ministry of Forests Act*, enabled in its present form in 1978 and refined through subsequent amendments, sets the mandate for the BCMoF. This mandate includes planning for the realization of non-timber values and products in coordination with timber harvesting. *The Ministry of Forests Act* also endorses the multiple use of forested lands. *The Forests Act*, also enabled in 1978, mandates multiple use of forested areas and directs the Chief Forester to consider social and economic objectives in the determination of AAC. An amendment to *The Forests Act* in 1987 included wilderness oriented outdoor recreation as a consideration in the management of forests. *The Forest Practices Code Act*, which was passed in 1994, provides the statutory foundation for timber harvesting and other considerations related to timber operations (such as road building). This Act also increased the level of public participation and notification in the development of timber management plans and timber operation plans (Wilson, 1998).

The BCMoF works with other agencies in the assessment and regulation of forest practices on Crown land. However, due to political and jurisdictional factors, the role of the other agencies is generally that of an advisory position. The federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans has jurisdiction over fish bearing streams in BC, and under the federal *Fisheries Act* is authorized to impose fines on logging companies whose harvesting practices destroy or alter fish habitat. The provincial Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks is mandated to manage and protect provincial land and animals (Wilson, 1998).

Both *The Ministry of Forests Act* and *The Forest Act* direct the BCMoF to pursue multiple use planning, and require timber companies to do so in the development of their management plans. The recognition that forested lands provide products and benefits other than timber imposes constraints on the operations of the BCMoF and timber companies, and provides an opportunity for environmental groups to press for the increased management and retention of non-timber

values and products. The *Forests Act* directs the Chief Forester to consider economic and social objectives in the determination of AAC. This indicates that timber volume is not the only measure of a sustainable harvest. Arguably, the consideration of economic and social objectives is intended to aid timber-dependant communities in the maintenance of stability. These considerations effectively bestow to communities the recognition that their concerns relating to the maintenance of economic and social stability are valid and, as a consequence, strengthen community and UBCM lobbying efforts. Furthermore, when taken together, multiple use planning and the pursuit of social and economic objectives form the basis of community forestry. The recognition of this reinforces the arguments of community forest proponents, including the UBCM, communities, and some environmental and ecological groups.

The constraints that are imposed on timber companies are increased through regulations legislated by *The Forest Practices Code Act* and, to a lesser extent, regulations regarding the protection of fish habitat mandated by the federal *Fisheries Act*. This has led many timber companies to protest that the timber industry in BC is over-regulated, and that the Provincial Government has created an environment that makes profit maximization difficult, if not prohibitive. When paired with timber market downturns, the FPC may fuel timber company downsizing, and create conditions that could prompt companies to consider walking away from their tenures, as Haley (1998) has suggested. However, these same conditions are favourable for communities seeking community forest tenures, as land could be obtained from current tenure holders either from a direct transfer, or through the creation of joint ventures or partnerships.

*The Forest Practices Code Act* has increased the role of public participation in forest management, as public consultation of proposed management plans is an integral part of the management planning process. This has had many effects on the management of forested land, two of which are relevant to the discussion of community forestry. By notifying the public (and communities) of the intent of management plans, timber companies are providing opportunities for communities to voice concerns about possible consequences of management plans to their citizens. These opportunities help to educate communities about, and prepare communities for the development of timber management plans. The lessons learned through the consulting process could aid communities in realizing the responsibilities associated with timber management, and provide them with experience for initiating community forest proposals.

## **Ideas**

### Government-Community Partnerships

The increase in participatory frameworks that address the management of public lands has been mirrored by the empowerment of public service employees. This inward and outward shift may herald a new paradigm in the management of public lands in Canada.

Empowerment has become an important concept in managing within the Canadian public sector. Increasingly, governmental organizations and departments have sought to improve the service and quality of their operations through the empowerment of their employees. This empowerment has led to a flattening of traditional hierarchies and has improved employee moral by involving employees as stakeholders in their respective organizations through encouraging their participation in decision making. Employees may find empowerment desirable as it gives them an opportunity to be recognized and consulted, and enhances their feelings of worth and value to, and within, the organization.

This movement toward the empowerment of government employees has been mirrored by Canadian government's (both federal and provincial) arrangements with community groups in an effort to improve the quality of service to those communities. In what Kernaghan & Seigel (1995) term *external empowerment*, a (governmental) organization seeks to empower their *clients* (the Canadian public as a whole, or more specifically communities) by involving them in the decision making process; within the context of government, this is done through the creation of partnerships. Increasingly, partnerships have been created between communities and governmental departments; this has been especially true in the realm of natural resources. The move toward increased empowerment and public participation create opportunities for individuals and communities to express what it is that they value in forested landscapes.

The varying degrees of partnerships that exist between governmental agencies, departments and ministries, and communities can be seen as degrees of citizen/community empowerment. In this section, empowerment is discussed with the intent of illustrating the opportunities that are afforded community forests, and how these opportunities differ from traditional models of management that have been applied to forested landscapes.

While community partnerships do provide an alternative to traditional forest landscape management, they have generally been limited to the management of non-timber values.

Community partnerships that provide communities with the opportunity to participate in a resource management decision making process can be considered examples of external empowerment; however, there are varying degrees of the levels of participation that are offered to communities. Kernaghan (1993) describes four types of partnerships which have been utilized by governments: *collaborative partnerships*, which involve the sharing of power (both rights and responsibilities) between the members of the partnership; *operational partnerships*, which involve the sharing of work among the partners; *contributory partnerships*, in which the government provides funding support to the community partner; and *consultative partnerships*, which describe situations where the government solicits advice from the community partner. The degree of empowerment in partnerships is greatest with collaborative partnerships, discussed below.

*Collaborative partnerships* allow all of the partners to share equally in the decision-making process; in doing so, each partner surrenders some of their traditional control as the partners become mutually dependant upon each other (Kernaghan, 1993). An example of a collaborative partnership would be community forestry. In a typical Canadian community forest, the partnership or agreement between the community and the government is formalized and involves the sharing of resources (which may include monetary arrangements, information and labour). Essential to the success of a collaborative partnership is mutual respect, which acts to facilitate the decision making process (while not always achieved, consensus is the ideal). It is expected that this mutual respect among the partners will develop, as the partners have common goals, each bringing a degree of expertise to the table; in the case of community forestry, these common goals might include the broadening of a community's economic base and the continuation of a viable timber harvest, while seeking to preserve natural resource values for alternative uses such as tourism or outdoor recreation. The typical partners in Canadian community forestry would be the provincial ministry or department responsible for natural resources (as the Provinces are responsible for the management of Crown land), a municipal government (which would represent local concerns), and community members and local stakeholders (such as businesses, land owners, and people dependant upon natural resources for employment). The partners would form a board or committee that would oversee decisions concerning the community forest. Within the context of partnership agreements, one might expect that the partners would be equal; however, the provincial ministry or department responsible for natural resources often takes a senior role as it remains legally responsible

(under the Canadian Constitution) for the management and administration of Crown land (Kernaghan, 1993).

### Partnership Characteristics

While the types of public empowerment partnerships vary, they are united by common characteristics that contribute to their relative degrees of success. Kernaghan (1993) has identified six characteristics that can serve as requirements for the successful implementation of community partnerships.

Kernaghan suggests that the first characteristic of successful partnerships is that a “partnership must include all stakeholders whose contribution is necessary for achieving the partnership’s goals” (1993, p. 73). The involvement of all stakeholders is necessary as it allows all views and concerns about an issue to be aired. The inclusion of stakeholders imparts a sense of ownership of the issue to the stakeholders; this can serve to provide conditions in which the stakeholders are likely to comply with the outcome(s) as they have had a role in developing the decisions.

In order to maximizing the effectiveness of the partnership relationship, it has been suggested that “the greater the degree of mutual dependence between/among the partners, the greater the probability that the partnership will be effective and enduring” (Kernaghan, 1993, p. 74). By increasing the degree of mutual dependence amongst the partners, it is unlikely that the desires of one of the partners will be co-opted, or assimilated, by the other(s). This mutual dependence also helps to foster a sense of respect for the other partner(s), which can contribute to a more congenial working atmosphere. Additionally, if the partners are on relatively equal ground, they are likely to take the other’s concerns and suggestions seriously. If the partners are mutually dependant, then the issue focusing the discussion has a greater potential to foster an atmosphere of true partnership.

At the heart of the empowerment argument is the degree to which the partners, feel that they are being taken seriously, this contributes to the partnership’s effectiveness. If the partners have had the opportunity to participate fully in the decision making process, then they will be more likely to have a better understanding and appreciation of the process that was employed.

The more people that are involved in a decision the greater number of ideas that are presented. “The pooling of resources in a partnership will have a synergistic effect in that the combined impact will be greater than the sum of the efforts of each partner acting alone” (Kernaghan, 1993, p. 74). While this characteristic holds true for ideas, it can be extended to other resources as well. For example, if a community group has a great deal of expertise or experience with a local issue or landscape, but lacks the financial resources to properly address that issue, a partnership with a governmental agency that has both the financial resources and an interest in the same issue can be beneficial. This example could be extended to mutual benefit if the governmental agency involved lacked the local knowledge that could contribute to the overall success of their endeavor.

Too often, a partnership tries to accomplish too much, and this lack of focus can act to strain resources and can dilute the expertise of the partners. By limiting the objectives of a partnership, more energy and focus can be harnessed, which can result in a faster resolution of an issue. Finally, with respect to partnership characteristics, it is most important that a partnership be formalized through a mutually acceptable agreement. This imposition of formal structure can further empower a partnership, as all parties know what is expected of them, and what they can expect from the other parties. The formalization of the partnership also gives the relationship legal standing, and can contribute to the maintenance of the partnership.

#### Characteristics of Community Forestry

Community forestry has been practiced globally in one form or another for centuries (Mitchell-Banks, 1988). This widespread application has led to a broad interpretation of what community forestry is, and what it can accomplish. A sampling of definitions of community forestry reveals that benefits to communities and local participation in the management of forested lands are common principles. In their discussion of community forestry, Brendler & Carey determined that “... managing forests with the express intent of *benefiting neighboring communities* constitutes yet another brand of forestry, which we call community forestry” (1998, p. 21) [emphasis added]. Three attributes commonly associated with community forestry are:

- that local residents have access to forested lands;
- that opportunities for the participation of local residents in management decisions relating to forested lands exists; and

- that an effort is made by the community to protect and restore the forest they have the responsibility of managing (Brendler & Carey, 1998).

The last attribute is noteworthy for two reasons: it suggests that the protection and restoration of local forest resources are important to community residents; and that protection and restoration of resources are not commonly associated with the practice of commercial forestry. The implication is that community values will carry significant weight in the development of management decisions. This belief is explicitly recognized in another definition of community forestry: “a tree dominated ecosystem managed for multiple community values and benefits by the community” (Duniker *et al.*, 1994, p. 712). The recognition of community values is gaining broader acceptance in the practice of forestry. The Forest Practices Code (FPC) of BC requires that timber harvesting companies address recreation opportunities, and aesthetics in the development of their management plans (BC Ministry of Environment, Lands, and Parks, 1995). Furthermore, recreational resources and opportunities “should be considered an integral component of the resource base of forested lands...[and] visual quality objectives should be established for forest landscapes” through the design of operational plans and through visual landscape inventory and analysis (BCMof, 1994, p. 57). These qualities can be considered a manifestation of managing for community values.

Community forestry requires the adoption of *adaptive management* – the assumption that any management action is an experiment (*i.e.* a means rather than an end) (Lee, 1993), which applies three basic principles to forest management. The first principle of adaptive management asserts that there ought to be strong overall policy that explicitly directs activities that provide for adaptive management. The remaining principles are extensive local experimentation incorporated into management strategies, and strong local control. Experimentation is necessary to determine the best management direction (Duniker *et al.*, 1991; Kimmins, 1991).

In the development of the BC CFI, the MoF have clarified their interpretation of community forestry:

In British Columbia, community forestry can be loosely defined as community involvement in local forest lands for community benefits. It is a means of maintaining forest-related community lifestyles and values, while providing jobs and revenue that contribute to community stability. (1997a)

The provision of jobs and community stability is in the spirit of the JTA, and consistent with the attributes of a community forest identified by Brendler & Carey (1998).

### Ontario's Experience with Community Forestry

The provision of community forests seeks to provide communities with both sustainable forestry opportunities and the diversification of local economies with amenities that includes recreational tourism (Duinker et. al., 1991). Community forests are more autonomous than community partnerships, though as will be discussed below, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) was involved in assisting communities with decision making and initial funding of the Ontario Community Forestry Initiative (OCFI). These two activities performed by the Ontario Government differentiate the OCFI from the BCCFI, in which communities must develop management plans that are self-sustaining and self-directed in order that they be considered for the pilot project.

As a result of the lobbying efforts of the Town of Geraldton in Northern Ontario, the OMNR began to consider a community forestry program. The OCFI was announced by the OMNR on May 7, 1991 as a sustainable forestry initiative to improve the management of Ontario's forests by allowing communities to become involved in decision making regarding the management of local forested landscapes (Harvey, 1993; Harvey & Hillier, 1994). In the development of the OCFI, discussions about the direction that community forestry would take in Ontario led to the development of some desired characteristics; these included: "self determination; wealth retention; local control; decentralization and partnerships; sustainable development and resource stewardship" (Harvey, 1993, p. 8). The result of these discussions was the creation and implementation of four pilot projects that would seek to develop and test the concept of community forestry on Ontario, as well as provide the Province with some background for the further development of community forestry. The pilot sites would each be advised by the OMNR, and be responsible to their respective communities as well as the OMNR (as a regulator). The provision of the OCFI acknowledged the publics' desire to become involved in the management of local forested landscapes. The Minister of Natural Resources at the time, Bud Wildman, stated that "We [the Government] must give Ontario residents a real voice in what we do in the forest. We must provide greater community involvement through new forms of working partnerships" (cited in Smith & Whitmore, 1991, p. 12). The four pilot project sites that were selected from 22 applications for tenure were Geraldton, Wikwemikong, Elk Lake, and

the 6/70 Area Economic Diversification Committee (near Kapuskasing) (Harvey, 1993; Harvey & Hillier, 1994).

Perhaps in response to suggestions that the OCFI was an opportunity for the Ontario Government to offload responsibility to communities, Harvey explains that the OCFI was neither another form of bureaucracy, nor a contracting out of initiative. Rather the OCFI would promote local autonomy and security of investment; and that community benefits, efficient decision making, resource stewardship, and security of tenure would be promoted (1993).

### The Menominee Experience

In the United States, the Menominee First Nation of northeastern Wisconsin has long practiced community forestry. The Menominee are a woodland people, who hold environmental values and derive much of their spirituality by maintaining a close relationship with the land. The Menominee experience with forest management can be considered a community forest as local people are in control of management decisions, and benefits from the management of forested lands are returned to the community through revenue and employment. When the Menominee Reservation was established in 1854, there was an estimated 1.5 billion board feet of saw timber growing stock in the management area. During the period 1865-1998, 2 billion board feet of timber had been harvested; recent timber inventories suggest that remaining timber stocks contained at least 1.5 billion board feet of timber. This maintenance of timber stocks can be attributed to the use of a continuous forest inventory, which the Menominee use to measure change and assists in the determination of the long-term positive and negative impacts of their forest management policies. The Menominee also operate a sawmill that has provided employment for members of the reserve, and has funded many of the reserve's social programs and priorities (Pecore, 1992). This example illustrates that the application of community forestry can be successful if forest lands are managed wisely.

### BC Community-Driven Initiatives

The idea of community-controlled, ecosystem-based forestry in BC has been put forward by a number of communities and individuals, particularly Herb Hammond of the Silva Foundation, and Michael M'Gonigle who holds the Eco-Research Chair of Environmental Law and Policy at the University of Victoria. Others have joined the call for the decentralization of forest policy and management and the creation of community forestry boards, including the Sloan Commissions of 1945 and 1956 and the Tin Wis Coalition. The Tin Wis Coalition is an association of

environmental groups, First Nations and forestry workers who are concerned with the long term management of forested lands. Another labour group that has supported community-based forestry is the Truck Loggers Association.

Much of the debate surrounding tenure reform in BC has focused on the perceived poor level of timber management, as it relates to ecosystem conditions. One factor that has contributed to this perception has been that no incentives exist for timber companies to make silvicultural investments on the lands they are responsible for managing. Luckert and Haley observe that, “[f]requently, the standard of management, or resource stewardship, achieved under such [forest tenure] agreements falls short of public expectations and social goals are not achieved” (1989, p. 182). Timber companies need to be able to capture some of the benefits of forest management in order that such management be successful. If requirements outweigh benefits (as many companies assert), then voluntary management of forest resources for social objectives, such as visual resource management, will no longer exist. Some form of security (e.g. longer leases) is necessary to provide incentive for tenure holders to manage Crown land (Marshall, 1986; Luckert & Haley, 1989).

In 1974, the Slocan Valley Community Forest Management Project proposed that communities should have control over local forest resources. Their proposal also suggested that “good ecology is good economics” (cited in Wilson, 1998, p. 143). The concept was opposed by the Forest Service, and eventually rejected in 1976 by the provincial government (Wilson, 1998).

Tanz and Howard (1991) discuss the *constituency forestry* concept developed by Behan, who addressed ‘multi-resource maintenance’. The constituency would encompass any individual affected by forest management decisions enough to “care about it”. The constituency is not local, but localized. The constituency model is more efficient than traditional public participation efforts, as it focus the discussion on a smaller group than the general public.

The idea of joint ventures between timber companies and communities has surfaced as one option to increase community input in timber management. In April of 1997, MacMillan Bloedel entered a joint venture with the Nuu-chah-nulth of Clayoquot Sound for the management of the former Estevan Division (Hoberg & Morawski, 1997). This joint venture had its roots in the framework for resource management partnership between the BC Government and the Nuu-

chah-nulth that was established through the Interim Measures Agreement signed in March of 1994.

The Community Forest Trust Act (CFTA) is a legislative framework that was proposed by Burda *et al.* (1997) as one in a series of recommendations for community-based forest management. The CFTA sought to create a process through which communities could manage Crown lands that had been transferred in to a trust held jointly by a community and the BC Government. An essential component of the CFTA is ecosystem management, which would guide communities in their development of management plans (Burda *et al.*, 1997). As argued earlier in this paper, eco-system management could well be a result of community management of forested lands, but it should not constrain the choices or decisions of community residents or managers.

Burda *et al.* (1997) propose a total of 42 recommendations that seek to guide the future of the BC forest industry. Despite the ecosystem management leanings of the recommendations, many of them seem strikingly similar to the CFI. For example, they recommended that a community forest tenure be established under *The Forests Act*; that the definition of 'community' applied to community forest tenures be broad; and that the community forest tenures cover a 100 year period and be renewable in ten year increments (1997). All of these are features of the CFI, except that the issuance of community forest licenses will be on a trial basis (e.g. pilot projects), though eventually, they will be for terms of 99 years (renewable).

## **BACKGROUND CONDITIONS**

Forestry operations and methods in BC are coming increasingly under pressure from a variety of actors. Forest practices, despite the implementation of the FPC, are under attack from environmentalists and consumer markets and public dissatisfaction with forest practices has been increasing for some time (Tanz & Howard, 1991).

Due to increasing public concern for the environment, Kimmins (1991) has argued that the resulting demands on forest opportunities will be increasingly diverse, and that forest management ought to recognize social diversity, and the variety of opportunities that forests provide. The evolution of forestry can be placed into four "stages" which represent the development of forestry concepts and outside influences on the practice of forestry. The increased public awareness and concern for the environment is indicative of society's entry into

the final stage of forestry, the social phase (Kimmins, 1991). An interesting aside is that community forestry is also generally referred to as *social forestry*.

The social forestry stage is characterized by forestry practices that are ecologically based and environmentally sound, and consider social and biophysical impacts on the global environment. The social phase also places importance on “satisfying the diverse needs of local, regional and national communities for recreation, aesthetics, and spiritual values...” (Kimmins, 1991, p. 14). Environmentalists’ arguments and campaigns have captured the attention of politicians and resource managers, and have resulted in a political climate in which leaders are prepared to consider conservation ideals. This shift to the social phase of forestry also entails the necessity of forestry becoming more people-oriented and sensitive to the needs of local communities. In order to address these suggestions, and this new stage of forestry, new management ideas and agreements will have to be developed.

A wide variety of actors have called for reform of the tenure system in BC. Some suggest that the current tenure system does not respond to or address changing social values, nor emerging economic realities due to a declining resource base. Individuals involved in small-scale forestry would like to see an expansion of the woodlot program; small value added companies would like more access to timber for secondary processing. Actors supporting or providing non-extractive activities also regard tenure reform as a necessity: tourist operators want forests managed for scenic values; environmentalists make pleas for wilderness protection; and ecologists require that the ecological integrity of forests be preserved (Burda *et al.*, 1997).

Discussion of the practice of community forestry has increased in Canada. Examples of community forests in other Canadian jurisdictions such as Ontario and Quebec exist; while other provinces, such as Newfoundland and Manitoba, have made inroads to developing opportunities for community forestry in response to increasing demand (Duniker *et al.*, 1994). As previously noted, there have been community forests operating in BC since 1946. These examples may have served to fuel the demand for a community forest tenure in BC. A number of communities in BC have proposed community-based forest management plans over the years and have worked to keep community forestry arrangements on the table:

- Slokan Valley (1975 and 1996)
- Hazelton (1991)

- Anahim County (1988)
- Robson Valley (1977)
- Cortes Island (1989)
- Yalakom (1989)
- Harrop-Procter (1993)
- Haida Gwaii (1994)

However none of these communities, with the exception of Harrop-Procter, have been successful in gaining government support (Burda *et al.*, 1997). As this list suggests, community interest in community forestry in BC is geographically diverse and spans three decades.

Related to the increased interest in community forestry are the conflicts that have arisen due to what local residents considered inadequate access to the decision-making process in the Stein and Carmanah valleys. Local community members considered the forest to be theirs, and consequently appealed for greater involvement in forest management decisions (Tanz & Howard, 1991).

It is likely that the successes of operating community forests, such as the Menominee experience in Wisconsin and the BC community forests in Mission, North Cowichian, and Revelstoke prompted policy makers and academics to revisit and examine community forestry as a viable forest management practice.

BC's economic conditions have also favoured the development of a new form of forest management. The declining profitability of the timber industry prompted the development of the JTA, which sought to create 21 000 new direct jobs in the timber industry by the year 2001 (BCMoF, n.d.a; Haley & Luckert, 1998). The development of new jobs was to create stability in the forest sector, timber dependant communities, and to some extent, the province. It had been hoped that, if successful, the JTA would salvage the forest sector, and begin to restore confidence in the NDP Government; though to date, this has not been accomplished. As previously stated, the Provincial Government had pledged to create a community forest tenure in the JTA.

## **POLICY OUTCOME**

Community forestry legislation, *Bill 34: Forests Statutes Amendment Act, 1998*, was passed by the BC provincial legislature on July 30 (BCMoF, 1998b). This omnibus bill served to codify the community forest tenure and included working definitions of community forestry, the application process and policy directives for pilot projects, the process for determining lease duration, and community forest regulations (Forests Statutes Amendment Act, 1998).

The community forest license was initially to be piloted in four communities (one of which was to be a First Nation community) in order that the tenure could be tested, and the appropriate changes made before the tenure was made widely available; however, a total of seven pilot communities were eventually chosen. The process of selecting the communities for the pilot projects was delegated to a sub-committee, who based their decisions on five criteria. Eligible communities had to be legal entities; have a confirmed land base and available timber; and had to demonstrate community support for the venture. In addition, eligible communities had to identify the management objectives for their community forest plan, and provide the strategies that would be employed to achieve the objectives. Communities also had to submit detailed business plans for the operation of the community forest (BCMoF, 1998b).

The exacting selection criteria served to achieve three objectives. Due to the large number of communities that expressed interest in acquiring a community forest tenure, the detail required in submissions and the costs associated to produce them encouraged serious applicants and deterred communities that were not committed to, or capable of successfully undertaking forest management. The criteria also imparted the seriousness and responsibility that is inherent in the management of forest land and activities. The development of objectives, strategies, and business plans gave communities the opportunity to experience the demands that they would have to meet in the management of a tenure. Finally, the criteria sought to maximize the success of selected communities, and of the community forest tenure; the criteria would encourage 'winning conditions' for all parties.

The resulting policy, though not yet tested, seems to be effective in meeting the goals of the Government, as community stability will be fostered through communities gaining control of their destinies. It also appears to be efficient on two counts. It is anticipated that the communities that will be included as pilot projects will be determined in less than one year of the passing of

the legislation. This expediency suggests that there is government support for the initiative. Secondly, the application process allowed successful communities to begin the management of their community forests with relative speed, as much of the necessary groundwork will have been completed.

## DISCUSSION

Pessimists in the forest sector may argue that the CFI is yet one more layer of bureaucracy that will have to be negotiated. The truth of this concern has yet to be borne out, though it seems an unlikely case. The BCMoF will continue to oversee the forest industry and the management of forested lands in BC. Communities will assume the role of tenure holders, much like any other licensee – except that the management of non-timber values is explicitly included in their agreement. Communities that manage community forests will have to adhere to the FPC and all other regulations governing timber management. Whether a community chooses to contract out logging activities or keep them in house will depend on the knowledge, expertise, and decisions of that community and its residents. If timber companies believe that municipal administrations will impose conditions that are unfavorable to successful operations, then the companies reserve the right not to get involved in the management or operation of community forests.

It is possible that community forestry will be perceived as an excuse for the provincial government to off-load the responsibility of forest management to communities, while not providing them the resources to do so. This too has yet to be borne out, although communities are only demanding responsibilities that timber companies already have. The attainment of local decision-making in, and the retention of local benefits from, forest management are resources in themselves that contribute to community stability. Resources, such as start-up grants, are not provided to communities in order that the relative successes or failures of community forests are not contingent on government support, but on communities' ability to manage within a given framework. Thus, CFI outcomes will be judged on their merits, not the effectiveness of provincial government contributions or assistance.

One concern that has been raised by industry is that communities may only seek short-term benefits and not managing for sustainability. One observer contends that the historical

approach to resource management (especially the use of Royal Commissions and advisory committees) is fragmented. It is likely that the adoption of a community-based tenure would actively engage local people in the management of resources: “the people, especially those working in the forest, would have a vested and long term interest in it” (Marshall, 1986, p. 8). This vested and long-term interest could enhance forest management, as it supports sustainable resource use. Indeed, Mallik and Rahman argue that “[s]ince the benefits and blames for land management under [community forestry] go directly to the community, the onus is on the community for sustainable ecosystem management” (1994, p. 734).

Agencies such as the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have found public involvement in forestry programs in developing nations to be a benefit to the successful outcome of initiatives, including community forestry (FAO, 1978). By adopting traditional practices in these countries, the people are more likely to embrace conservation ideals: “It has become conventional wisdom that we cannot preserve the values of protected areas and their biodiversity unless we create more humane policies for resident peoples and thus gain their support” (West, 1994, p. 303).

Other problems that have surfaced regarding public empowerment include the potential lack of awareness of the public of the implications and ramifications of natural resource and forested landscape management decisions. Background material for many of the management issues may be inaccessible due to small circulation or the technical content of reports. If the public is to be involved in the decision making process, information must be accessible; the public must be able to make informed decisions. “The decision of citizens to become directly involved in decision making for forest management and policy must be marked by a desire for increased awareness of forest ecosystems and how they respond to human intervention” (Ontario Forests Policy Panel, 1993, p. 12). The desire for increased awareness has been expressed; the onus lies with governments to make such information available; it should be noted that with advances in technology, information could be made available more easily.

Provincial standards, under the FPC, will continue to be enforced in community forests. Such government oversight is necessary to assure that community forest-management principles are consistent with stewardship principles. The result is a balance between community control over timber resources and government regulation (Mallik & Rahman, 1994).

Given that some commercial-scale timber companies contend that they are having difficulties generating revenue in their operations, one is led to wonder if, given economies of scale, smaller timber operations (like those that will be created with community forestry) will be viable both in terms of ability to realize a profit and in meeting environmental standards. The achievements of the Woodlot Licence Program and the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program, both endorsed by Pearse in 1976, would suggest that viability on both counts can be realized; major economic scale effects and benefits appear to be in the processing of, not in the harvest of timber. One revision that environmentalists would like to institute is to make both programs more accountable to communities close to their areas of operation. One suggestion has been to include a residency requirement in the Woodlot Licence Program (Burda *et al.* 1997).

It is possible that as the area of land that managed under community forest agreements will be smaller than that of industrial forest agreements, the size of clear cuts may be smaller as community aesthetic concerns can be a contributing factor; examples of this may be found in Mission and North Cowichian (Duniker *et al.*, 1991). Whether smaller clear cuts are better than larger ones is a subject of debate; though from an environmentalist and aesthetics standpoint, smaller is usually more acceptable. Community design of forest management techniques and policy may be more sensitive to the environment; but it is also likely that the management techniques (such as plantation forestry, or comprehensive silvicultural prescriptions) will be more intensive and may involve ecosystem manipulation.

The risk of community forest management being susceptible to the whims of the public and local politicians does exist. However, forest management decision-making by traditional actors (government, industry, and professionals) can no longer considered the only, or necessarily the best, way to practice forestry; a balance of interests is needed (Duniker *et al.*, 1991). Community forest management should be a healthy balance of public and professional involvement; a balance is required regarding local and provincial control of forested land.

There is a widely held belief that the application and practice of community forestry will result in better forest practices that are based on sustainability and stewardship. For example,

Community forestry, which is predicated on *the maintenance of forest ecosystems over time through broad-based local stewardship*, enables the people closest to the forest to operate in, and manage the use of, the forests on

a long-term sustainable basis. Community forestry involves local control and retention of forest products and benefits. Under strict management principles, decisions can be made for the benefit of the community at large by those most affected by the decisions. (Burda *et al.*, 1997, p. X) [emphasis added]

For Burda *et al.* (1997), community forestry is not an end in and of itself; rather it is a means for pursuing and establishing ecosystem-based forestry. While communities may choose to base their management decisions on ecosystem-based principles, it should not be a foregone conclusion that they will do so. Community forestry is based upon local control of resources and participation in developing management plans; to impose a requirement for ecosystem-based forestry is to deny communities all of the choices available to them. While the practice of ecosystem-based forestry may be a solution to achieving sustainable-forestry, the pursuit of this concept ought to be the community's decision.

A community forestry agreement is not a *carte blanche* to harvest timber that is given to communities. It is an agreement between a community and the provincial government that allows the community to manage local forest-land (both timber and non-timber amenities) in the interests of their citizens. Existing rules, regulations, and guidelines for forest practices will still apply.

## CONCLUSION

The promise of community forestry has been much heralded, but its institutionalization into the BC forest tenure system has yet to be evaluated. Comparisons of the CFI to existing community forests in BC are instructive, though such comparisons are not without their shortcomings. The community forests in Mission and Revelstoke operate under TFL agreements, and are subject to appurtenancy and cut control requirements; the principal management concern is timber extraction. North Cowichan's community forest exists within the municipal boundaries of the town as fee simple land and, as it is not bound by provincial forestry regulations, the forest can be managed as private land. That these community forests exist at all is indicative of the resolve of community leaders, broad community support, and the ingenuity of their forest managers. These qualities contribute to the successes of these community forests, and set a high standard for communities making submission under the CFI to meet. However, as discussed, the community forest tenure is a very different sort of agreement.

The CFI was developed to meet specific conditions, including a smaller sized, area-based tenure, and the inclusion of non-timber values and products in management considerations. Another objective was to satisfy the promises and objectives set out in the JTA. Community economic and social stability are the desired outcomes of government; local control and retention of local benefits are the desired outcomes of communities. While these political aims are part of the driving force behind the CFI, there is another outcome deserving of attention. Community management of forested lands under the CFI is not merely timber management, but *forest management*. Communities are expected to treat their management responsibilities holistically. The management of timber values is to be co-ordinated with the management of non-timber values and products. The management context is very different from the traditional frameworks applied to commercial timber harvesting. The maintenance and promotion of community values, accepted as having an intrinsic role in the realization of community stability, recognizes that forests offer more than just timber.

The CFI addresses the increased demand from timber-dependant communities for a larger role in forest resource management and decision-making. Indeed, when acting as the Minister of Forests, David Zirnelt, recognized that there were 88 communities that had expressed an interest in pursuing pilot projects (BCMof, 1998c). The pursuit of community forestry is clearly important for timber-dependant BC communities. The CFI provides a framework for increasing access and opportunity for these communities.

The importance of opportunities that provide for community stability to timber-dependant communities cannot be understated. One only has to listen to the emotion that underlies community leader's demands for action to realize that for many communities, the CFI is regarded as a last hope. Tom McCrae, the Mayor of Tahsis, alluded to the helplessness many communities feel when he declared that "control of fiber controls community destiny" (1998a). The continued downsizing of timber crews and mill closures further aggravates the situation. The success of the CFI and individual community forests is not preordained, but communities want to be empowered to direct their futures.

Some observers suggest that the decentralization of forest management may lead to conditions that would favor the realization of short-term goals over sustainable forest management (Hoberg, 1997). The implication of this hypothesis is that by bringing forest management down to the stakeholder level, forest managers will lose sight of 'the big picture', and be less

susceptible to provincial and national values and attitudes surrounding forest uses. However, communities stand to lose the most if their management practices are not sound – one must remember that the community forest tenures are to be long term (up to 99 years); this may help to solidify the degree of local place attachment of the actors. Key to the development of the CFI, and the selection of pilot projects are the inclusion of criteria that would make the pursuit of short-term goals at the cost of sustainable forest management difficult. Indeed, it can be expected that the pilot projects will be monitored closely for just that possibility. By including the responsibility of the management of non-timber values and products, community forest agreements will have to be preservationist to some extent in order that the resulting benefits can be maintained.

The BCMoF was slow to formalize the community forest tenure. The CFI can be seen as a response to the increased demand from communities for such a tenure, and an acknowledgement that some communities were already pursuing community forestry arrangements. By initializing a process to direct community interest, the BCMoF was taking control over the direction of community forestry. As BC forest policy tends to develop after 'long gestation periods', community forestry received the same treatment as other policy initiatives – though the quick resolution of the CFI suggests that the supporting political will was influenced by economic and social conditions. Given the current state of the forest sector in BC and the calls for tenure reform from an increasing number of actors, the evolution of the CFI is worth watching and warrants further investigation.

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