



Conference summary—Canadian Institute of Forestry 2009 AGM and Conference

Stewardship: Energizing forestry

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The forest industry and forest management in British Columbia and Canada are in a period of great flux because of global economies, climate change, and environmental concerns. As the business of forestry changes, forestry professionals must adapt—a reality that inspired the 2009 Canadian Institute of Forestry Conference held in Nanaimo, BC this past September.

The first day of the conference began with a keynote presentation by **Werner Kurz** (Canadian Forest Service [CFS]), a member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Kurz spoke about “Climate Change, Carbon, Bioenergy, and Forestry.” He noted that experts predict that the managed forest land base in Canada will be a future source of carbon because of increased natural disturbances (especially wildfire and insect infestation). To meet carbon targets, Kurz said it is better to decrease net emissions than to maximize forest carbon stocks and storage. In trying to integrate forests into climate change mitigation strategies, forestry professionals must understand that you cannot simultaneously maximize both storage (maximum in older stands) and uptake (highest rates in younger stands). Over the long term, Kurz said that substituting biofuels for fossil fuels is the most beneficial way to use forests to reduce net carbon emissions.

The first session of the conference was a panel discussion on the topic of “New Demands: Stewardship and Players,” and featured short presentations by the panel members, followed by a question period. Some of the key points raised in the presentations and questions included:

- **Bill Bourgeois** (New Direction Resource Management) stated that the forest sector must contribute to community resiliency.
- **Gordon Weetman** (University of British Columbia [UBC]) noted that forestry professionals need enhanced skills and education beyond the traditional sustained yield management systems taught in universities.
- **Art Sterritt** (Coastal First Nations) discussed how the move toward ecosystem-based management on the BC coast has had the positive outcome of getting First Nations bands working together.
- **Mike Slivitsky** (CFS Forest Communities Program) stated that community forests present

many benefits, including: greater partnerships between communities, individuals, and First Nations; economic benefits for the local community; and greater local capacity and forest knowledge. However, he also said that successful community forests do face challenges, including the need for management continuity and to maintain community “champions.”

- **Rick Jeffrey** (Coast Forest Products Association) discussed how the forest sector will need to increasingly look at non-traditional markets, both geographically (especially China), and in terms of marketing and producing products for non-residential construction.

The second session was a panel discussion on “New Demands: Products, Bioproducts, and Bioenergy” and included the following key messages:

- **Bruce Eakett** (PriceWaterhouseCoopers) noted that bioenergy is a by-product of a healthy forest products and paper industry, and therefore a viable forest industry is needed to provide forest bioenergy opportunities.
- **David Lazell** (University of Calgary) stated that biofuels could satisfy roughly 20% of Canada’s energy needs and that generating heating and electricity are the most efficient uses of biomass.
- **Catherine Cobden** (Forest Products Association of Canada) discussed how bioenergy production needs to integrate with a healthy forest industry and leverage the existing capacity, infrastructure, and waste fibre streams.

A field tour was held on the second day of the conference, with visits to a number of locations between Nanaimo and Duncan. The tour leaders provided commentary on the local landscape and on the history of the local forest industry. Field tour stops included:

- Coastal Douglas-fir forest, to view mature second-growth and reforestation efforts
- Power pole manufacturing facility
- Western Forest Products lumber remanufacturing plant that powers kilns with bioenergy
- BC Forestry Museum
- The Town of Chemanius, to view murals and a small old-growth stand along Askew Creek
- Harmac Pacific pulp mill, which was recently purchased by employees and has been thriving, despite the recent economic conditions
- Nanaimo Regional Waste Operation and its



through new strategies and partnerships

methane recovery and power generation facility

The third day of the conference started with a mixed-media presentation, compiled by **Brian Titus** (CFS), which offered a range of views on the costs and benefits of cap-and-trade versus carbon taxation for reducing carbon emissions. The presentation argued that while cap-and-trade systems are attractive to businesses, it is not clear whether they will be effective at reducing emissions, or whether they are ethical.

The second presentation of the day was by **Gary Bull** (UBC) on the topic of "The Carbon Business: What Every Forester Needs to Know." Bull noted that managing forests for carbon will influence forest management practices and the type of wood and energy products produced. The pursuit of forest carbon as a commodity presents opportunities for students and professionals, especially in the fields of modelling, biometrics, and bioenergy. New forest management prescriptions that include forest carbon will also be necessary; and in turn, high prices for carbon storage will affect forest management practices and forest products. In the end, the move towards including carbon as a forest management objective needs to be treated as an opportunity to fund better forest management practices.

The balance of the third day featured presentations on a range of topics, including the following:

Harry Bombay (National Aboriginal Forestry Association): Diversification of the Aboriginal Forest-based Economy

- The primary question addressed was how First Nations people can derive greater benefit from increased involvement in management of forest resources.
- The two broad directions being followed are: (1) restoring the role of First Nations as stewards of the land and (2) exploring a diversity of approaches to forest-based development.
- Tenure reform is felt to be a key to increasing Aboriginal participation in the forest economy, along with diversification through decreased harvesting and greater land management and value-added processing.

Jennifer Gunter (BC Community Forest Association [BCCFA]): Current Community Forest Issues in BC

- Recommendations for continued improvement of the BC Community Forest system included: (1) long-term tenures, (2) area-based tenures, and (3) governance that is both representative of the community and participatory for community members.
- The BCCFA have recently completed a Community Forests film, clips of which can be viewed on their website. (www.bccfa.ca/resources/the-community-forest-film.html)

Bill Bourgeois (New Direction Resource Management): Ecosystem-based Management (EBM)

- In EBM, ecological integrity is the first objective among equals.
- Monitoring is essential, but tends to be a bit of a black hole in terms of funding.
- EBM requires a commitment to true collaboration for success.

Brian Harvey (Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue): Big Changes on the Horizon for Quebec Forestry

- Proposed new legislation in Quebec will result in less wood available for large licensees and more for small operators.
- There will be potential for zones of intensive silviculture on roughly 15–20% of the managed forest land base, with the intent of doubling yields on those lands.

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May says climate change primary challenge

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Thom Erdle (University of New Brunswick): New Stewardship and Forest Management Issues in New Brunswick.

- There is a need for new management initiatives because of industrial demand for more wood from public land, environmental concerns about forest management, and the meltdown of the traditional forest industry base.
- Modelling shows that, depending on the values, the effects of forest management scenarios are different, and each scenario has trade-offs.

The final formal presentation of the day was given by **Elizabeth May**, leader of the Green Party of Canada, who stated that climate change is the primary challenge for Canada and for forest managers in Canada. May stressed the need to view forests for the ecosystem services they provide, including carbon, water, and habitat—values that are difficult to monetize without a clear market price. A final panel discussion featured current forestry students and recent graduates talking about how they chose their career, where they saw

themselves in the future, and what their vision was for the future of forestry in a changing world.

The conference provided an excellent introduction to the rapidly changing world of forest management and forest products, including emerging opportunities and challenges around bioenergy and carbon. From the diversity of topics and the issues raised by conference participants, it is clear that a strong forest sector in Canada is needed, at the level of both forest management and forest products. Forest professionals will have to adapt to new products, markets, and management systems, while also dealing with the overarching uncertainty associated with climate change. Forest managers can also play a role in Canada's climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts through carbon sequestration and bioenergy production. 🌲

The conference website can be viewed at: www.viu.ca/cif/ and the conference program can be downloaded from: www.viu.ca/cif/documents/agm-program.pdf. PowerPoint presentations and audio recordings of talks are available on the CIF website: www.cif-ifc.org/site/2009_nanaimo