



For Immediate Release

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UBC researcher receives \$431,000 research award

Dr. Thomas Maness leads inter-provincial research team in developing a new way to effectively measure the public's forest preferences

Vancouver, British Columbia Principal Investigator Dr. Thomas Maness will receive a total of \$431,000 over three years to develop a new computer model that will provide a new way for the public to view proposed landscape changes and assess various tradeoffs so that researchers can more accurately determine public preferences toward forested areas. The research effort will document, for the first time, a broad picture of how the public determines what it is prepared to trade-off in order to protect forest values they care about. The computer model, the first to include ecological, economic and social criteria, will illustrate multiple trade-offs that can be cumulatively forecasted, illustrated and used to develop preferred plans on how best to access and use the landscape for multiple purposes.

The study will help forest managers understand the trade-off patterns preferred by the public. This research work will illustrate various biodiversity and social goals that ultimately will have an impact on economic productivity, or what the implications for alternate uses preferred by the public will be regarding the future use of Canada's forests.

The research effort will create an actual sustainable forest management plan in real time that responds to the public's stated preferences. The computer will provide the opportunity to actually see a recognizable local landscape and see how those various selected trade-offs would ultimately effect the landscape if implemented. Users of the model can then refine the original plan to avoid various unintended consequences. The work will also identify how people's preferences change as they obtain more information about the details of a specific forest management plan.

Dr. Maness' proposal went through an extensive scientific peer-review process. His project received significant support from Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada-Canadian Forest Service and Canadian Forest Products Ltd.

Dr. Maness will be supported by Drs. Robert Kozak, Tim McDaniels and Stephen Sheppard, University of British Columbia and by Dr. Erin Bayne, University of Alberta.

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