FFP Victoria Workshop, 2008 06 17 - Results of Scenario Discussions

Forest Futures Project of the Sustainable Forest Management Network

Transcribed from flipchart notes and workshop recorder files by Peter Duinker, Project Manager

Scenario A - Goods from the Woods

Inconsistencies
- governance - key role for gov't to regulate bioenergy, water rights; assumption that commodity focus would infer enabling of regulation for market activity; private rights and Crown to enable, not anarchy
- biodiversity and integrity index - still disturbance, etc., removals, genome intro, hybrid, aliens, etc., yet EI improves - inconsistent (but, 22% protected)
- jobs plentiful, but increased automation - will recreational jobs offset
- private recreation $ up, but not as increased paying
- SFM tenures would need to be addressed
- regional focus, trading blocks, yet market-based require global trade - inconsistent
- if decreased interest socially, then why increased integrity?

Main Messages
- urban/rural split - consequence of scenario
- technology is all good and key to success
- does corporate consolidation lead to rural pop'n decline?
- more automation, fewer jobs
- market assumptions play a key role
- corporatization up, doesn't lead to a drop in ecological integrity
- zoning will be beneficial - intensive forest management, reserves, PAs
- EI driven by commercial recreation profitability
- driven by opportunities from forest, not vision, not proactive, more response-driven
- assume future is OK, with certainty; CC has been addressed
- FNs improved socially and economically, but not politically?
- not affected by or worrying about global security; complacency; rest of the world is adapting
- private water rights a key action - would it have the effect of improving water sustainability?

Implications for BC
- increased privatization
- demographics of forestry - increased FN participation
- more PAs - industrial zones, planning done
- restrictive zones, no flexibility given the disturbance regimes
- privatization, but still key government role - e.g., water rights, biomass
- increased forest growth, competition with increased urbanization and agriculture - eastern VI
- profitability of biomass industry in BC - access to forests
- decrease in CWD in managed forests

- riparian management, given BC hydro regime
- concentration of private rights - competitiveness and access as government objectives
- people shifting from forest focus - a big step for BC
- decline in Forest Service

Responses
- reaction linked to level of distraction (urban bliss), jobs and amount of direct impact from water, food, air quality
- no significant disparity in wealth (blissful ignorance)
- are elements of it now playing out? - concentration, privatization
- policy for biomass
- ENGOs and international mobilization
- water concern - privatization
- rural rebellion - would anyone notice?
- increased distrust in government and corporations with privatization
- concern over tradeoff between forest sector rents but drops in other values
- if people see new jobs, they might be placated

Scenario B - Peace in the Woods

Inconsistencies
- "much more sustainably produced products" - would need to be vastly more sustainable production to maintain standard of life
- temperature increase (low-moderate) inconsistent with other aspects of scenario, e.g., air pollution reduction (will technology solve this?)
- overly optimistic re: CC, invasive species
- tension/contradiction between community focus and dependence on market forces (re: markets for forest services)

Main Messages
- strong economic development initiatives
- localized, community-based (implications for infrastructure)
- less urgency if the world turns out this way (but lots of urgency now if we're going to create this world)
- the western world's dream - free lunch, not much pain
- sustainable living - big change from today - volunteerism, communitarianism
- need for big cultural, technological and governance shifts
- assumption is that technological innovation allowed people to live sustainably, "nicer to one another" (being comfortable allows kindness)

Implications for BC
- a lot of aspects are out of our control
- others (e.g., tenure system, FN issues) are within our control
- need for shift in attitudes (attention and care for life support system), governance

- change in zoning - more PAs
- challenges in tension between centralization (PAs) and decentralization (community control)
- where is tax base?
- design of PA system for climate-change adaptation
- management for different values and need to know more about forests (inventory, climate-sensitive ecosystems, monitoring)
- new framework for allocation of resources and tax revenue between communities and centre
- how/why did demand for solid wood become reduced? (what's needed to lower demand - technology?)
- stronger tie between communities and global markets needed (and require very solid demand and market)
- tension between "buy local" and connection to market, also carbon implications (transport)
- appertunancy needed (link between primary resource and further production)
- recognition of interdependencies ecologically, economically, socially, politically
- potential tension between Ab and non-Ab communities (re: increased power of FNs) - how do we deal with it?

Responses
- maybe BC people couldn't see what's emergin because so much change would be occurring
- teach optimism
- change tenure system
- technology will serve us
- if people could see it happen, they'd be pleased
- R&D, accept risk
- requires long-term vision
- lots of tension between optimism and degree of change
- education
- change in public service (willingness to accept change)
- access and benefits - FNs controlling access to resources, intellectual property rights; integration of corporate sector and communities
- some would say there are enough PAs (erosion of timber land base) - although less demand for timber may mitigate
- rethinking of dependencies on single values (timber) vs. full range of forest values

Scenario B - Peace in the Woods

Inconsistencies
- low conflict over resources - appears unrealistic - will there ever be less? people will always have divergent points of view; low conflict with increased recreation use seems inconsistent
- CC numbers - too low (too similar to what we already see today)
- how can pop'n increase and demand/consumption for good increase while energy consumption goes down? this would require serious magic!
- riparian management guidelines don't fit with cumulative impacts - should be watershed
- silent on fire protection - what about natural fire regime, and implications for ecological

condition?
- if recreation is king, you would expect more stand tending to be required; however, there is no increase in forest employment
- lowering harvest and increasing PAs - not clear how this would lead to net carbon source
- silent on agriculture?
- biodiversity unrealistic - even with no CC, there are species in trouble; decreased harvesting will not fully mitigate the biodiversity concerns - this is painting a rosy picture of the status quo; more people, more access, no fire protection - seems unlikely to not affect biodiversity (esp. species)
- how do you increase old growth - 40 years isn't enough time for old growth to have a large increase, at least on the coast
- even if industrial harvesting goes down, there still is going to be a need for management (just managing different things)
- capacity of local communities to actually run the show?? Will they actually have the expertise they need? Will people with the expertise move out to those communities? Requires significant cultural change
- this scenario does not work with the demographics - urbanization, immigration, increased population numbers
- if this is "peace in the woods", what in fact is the "war"?

Main Messages
- large shift in societal values happening over a short period of time
- implies an increased involvement in democracy
- greater Ab empowerment
- perhaps a greater involvement of minorities?
- shift from industrial use of the forest to more recreational use

Implications for BC
- policies need to be much more flexible; to make this change will need new information systems to support policy decisions
- changing relationship between people and nature (forests)
- may redefine how/what people do when they recreate (e.g. maybe no motorized recreation)
- soil erosion - what do we have to do to mitigate? do we need controlled erosion management in relation to agriculture?
- less reliance on structured markets which could affect governance structures
- need to take steps to create a "land ethic" for people in BC, to strengthen the connectedness to the land
- be careful of not "loving nature to death"

Responses
- conflict in rural communities
- capacity-building in communities, especially FN communities
- strong strategy in place for guidance and support
- more research into things such as ecosystem services

- do some polling work to understand how communities transition (i.e. poll a community with a recent mill closure, vs not)
- improve the relationships between Ab groups and non-Ab communities
- micro-lending organizations to support local business

Scenario C - Turbulence in the Woods

Inconsistencies
- implausible increased oil consumption given peak supply
- only 300 species listed would be an increase
- if food is an issue, then hunting and gathering would increase
- increased polarization resulting from antagonism vs. apathy - see below
- societal - forest visits up, but amenity and recreational use has vanished
- where do urban forests go if population increases?
- inconsistencies between fibre supply and geopolitics, esp. with improved economy (or is it covered by bioenergy)
- increased salvage harvesting inconsistent with managing for water
- governance - inconsistency between increased land ownership for Abs (to 5%) and decreased economic activity

Main Messages
- neglect
- instability of wood supply, forest management, geopolitics
- society on the verge of collapse - bunker/blinder mentality
- internal conflict - wealth disparity, lower standard of living; value-based conflicts; disfunction, apathy - drugs, videos; safety in the forest
- fish/food issues - increased ocean pH, increased agriculture
- lower human health, higher stress (physical, psychological)
- degraded landscape
- reactive - short-term economic gratification; woods not managed
- feudal corporate behaviour
- so little wood, we don't waste

Implications for BC
- reduced government participation in forestry
- conversion of land to agr and other non-forest
- reduced land stewardship and planning (IRM)
- polarization in BC culture would lead to increased conflict with resource barons
- reduced innovation, research and forest knowledge
- barons demand private land rights
- escalation in FN-baron conflicts

Responses
- diversity of reaction - some bunker, some fight back - ENGOs, FNs, rural communities

- isolationism - close off immigration, increased self-reliance, reduced free trade
- demand that government do something!
- mobilized public
- visioning
- communicate/share knowedge - study the changes - why happening?
- implement response through change in governance and institutions, through process/policy/leg
- how to change direction - economic/social initiatives, grass-roots change, increased capacity for adaptation
- look outside BC to help solve - would we flounder??

Scenario C - Turbulence in the Woods

Inconsistencies
- hard to imagine that forest companies are doing well; with the environmental conditions presented, hard to imagine corporations doing well (both in BC and globally)
- scenario seems to hold the rest of the world constant (not consider the environmental impact and implications for the world)
- it's a bleak-looking world - how could industry be doing well?
- with regen failure, plus high rates of harvest in parts of Canada, this could mean that there is no forest left by 2050
- believe that agr will go more toward biofuel than food, due to market
- even with increased population shift there will still be people shifted out of their comfort zone
- there doesn't seem to be enough impact reflected in the urban setting as may result from all this environmental change
- it speaks to environmental refugees, but what about health refugees (add in some pandemic impacts)
- nuclear energy - would need to reflect some different governance required - a central governance for the nuclear grid
- if so much environmental change, then expect a reduced tax base - what does that mean for the governance structure (who's paying for it?)

Main Messages
- people's comfort level is gone
- governance falls apart
- "the big take from the little"
- everything we try doesn't work - hopelessness
- life expectancy and quality of life go way down
- this is bigger than BC - we can't solve this on our own and will need to reach out globally

Implications for BC
- tax base affected
- new governance model towards a feudal system (or a caution that whatever the governance model is, it could lead us toward a feudal system)
- shift from timber companies to energy companies

- major drought in central interior means many impacts to existing markets (wine, agr, water)
- people in so much distress are going to need release mechanisms - will need recreation close to centres
- this scenario creates the "burning platform" that will actually get people to fully react

Responses
- water rights "nationalized"
- may undo the transfer of forest tenure - maybe recentralize?
- government may have to be more aggressive with policy control - more centralized regulation; also, urban population has to get on board
- tenure has to be lighter (more flexible) so it could move around
- more comprehensive land-use plans due to public demand; broader objectives for tenure - not just forestry
- this isn't something BC can do on its own - becomes global
- global pressures on BC forests are massive - we won't be the ones deciding on cutting our trees
- due to energy costs, more entrepreneurial activity
- to prevent disconnect of immigrants with the forest and environment, need more education programs
- how to control immigration to BC when this is in national jurisdiction?
- it's all about mitigation - but BC's efforts won't matter unless the rest of the world does
- mitigation expenses focussed on carbon caps

Scenario D - Restoration in the Woods

Inconsistencies
- fuel prices risen only modestly (already increased, but is it a blip?) mitigated by cooperation
- behaviours that increase environmental impact at same time as care for the environment increases
- local-global connections bypass national level
- source of $$ for restoration? - tension between restoration and other needs
- not shift to alternative energies although shift in values (inherent in the scenario that the alternative didn't work out)

Main Messages
- optimists' view of human social response to disruption
- need for major technological developments that disconnect ability to generate wealth from environmental quality/footprint
- "crisatunity"!
- coming to brink might create impetus to change worldview, to work together
- assumption - UN agencies are vehicle for global cooperation; are there other mechanisms?
- challenge - connecting community level to global governance (there are already examples - certification, community forestry)
- shift in urban perspectives to care about forests and rural communities
- willingness to support that goes beyond rhetoric

- shift of effort from mitigation to adaptation
- hope is in restoration (to balance grief of environmental decline
- acceptance of changes - species at risk, climate change

Implications for BC
- it's a different world - need to revisit restoration efforts, assumptions about harvest levels
- what are we restoring to?
- rehabilitation, reclamation, bioremediation
- openness to new ecological assemblages?
- focus on ecosystem services
- who will be doing the restoration?
- embracing change vs. just coping
- forest sector has a less central role to play (less economic extraction, relatively more on spiritual/nostalgic values)
- types of jobs changed - recreation, restoration silviculture
- encourage funding of low-footprint technologies now

Responses
- investing in value-added, local economies, non-timber products, ecosystem services (this response assuming hope)
- shift of investments in infrastructure (e.g. water), initiatives (e.g., restoration)
- if opportunities not seen (i.e. lack of ways of responding), then withdrawal, despair
- shift of focus - where will efforts pay off (e.g., invasive species adapt rather than try to eradicate)
- ameliorate change - lifestyle, education
- foster a sense of hope - choice agency/efficacy locally and globally
- key to be connected globally to help foster action, break down borders
- appeal to higher principles