
FFP Corner Brook Workshop, 2008 06 04 - 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

- commodification - leads to resignation by public, or is it satisfaction?
- increased wood supply vs. increased PAs
- significant warming
- multinational control vs. regional trading blocks
- more conflict but why peaceful resolution?
- more biofuels inconsistent with more good jobs
- issues around water quality - where do we have poor water quality? (not a source-area problem?)
- improved jobs but out-migration?
- we know enough now to do a good job

Important Messages

- business as usual
- good for industry as a whole, despite change
- environmentally miraculously good
- validates much of what has been said
- resolution of conflicts an open question - participation is gone
- society accepts that goods are good
- corporate management of conflict more easily accomplished than public management
- agree on fundamentals
- specific demographic behaviour "won't enjoy demographic boom"
- climate change and reduced snowfall

Implications for NL

- increased forest production and economy but fewer actual jobs
- shift of activity to Labrador; depends on lift in AAC
- relationship between oil/gas and forest energy - shifts with price
- large change in pulp-related industry and economy - could be loss or transformation
- shift in psyche required to get to privatization, particularly for recreation, moose hunting; linked to de-ruralization, more criminalization and requirement for regulation of traditional activities; less resistance due to urbanization
- ability to support rural infrastructure - education, healthcare, capacity for self-governance
- how to commodify the view - \$\$ for pictures? value of pristine
- rural out-migration to where?
- increased regional disparities

- much is driven by the oil industry
- viability of rural communities

Responses

- negative toward privatization, but perhaps sliding acceptance
- welcome opportunities for recreation activities
- value of culture

Scenario A - Goods from the Woods

Inconsistencies

- climate change and vigorous mitigation - modest change may not induce vigorous mitigation, so countries would only embrace modest mitigation
- global energy demand/supply - if there is less demand, shouldn't prices be reduced? Is this a supply issue, or regulatory issue?
- demographics - increase in forest-based products should result in a resurgence of rural activity, so community sustainability should be improved
- societal values - as economic activities increase in the forest sector, the value of the sector should increase, as should the public's perception of the economic and societal values of forests
- Aboriginal empowerment - why does a lack of political gain ensue given more land transferred to Aboriginals, along with more forest-products employment and more benefits? One would think rather of more political power, but perhaps less community and cultural value and identity
- participatory processes - if rural communities have a role in increased forest products and harvesting, etc., then communities would see value in communal rights and the protection of values, therefore maybe more participatory
- industry/newsprint - is the decrease in newsprint production in Canada driven by reduce demand or global competition; if there is an improvement in energy costs, perhaps there would be a more competitive NA market for newsprint

Important Messages

- modest ecological change
- forest jobs increased and improved (are they rural or urban jobs, because among rural communities, only Ab ones benefit)
- people still consume a lot of goods
- this scenario is where we were 20 yr ago
- still a resource-based economy, still doing well
- challenges in land-use conflicts - we still haven't figured it out (bioenergy, forests, beef)
- increased use of bioenergy - therefore conflicts in global demands for agricultural landbase vs. forests

Implications for NL

- Ab and forest worker demand to support new economy (Island Ab pop'n low); out-migration, i.e., movement to urban settings, equals death of rural communities in NL
- however, increased diversification of forest commodities should increase community and thus

rural sustainability

- privatization of forest recreation should be favourable for rural NL communities
- no major land-use conflicts; cattle/oil
- still conflict over recreation (viewsheds) vs. harvesting/manufacturing
- NL should be a major exporter (well positioned for this)
- immigration should increase ability to compete in a labour crisis if it is focussed on populating rural areas (right now, trades are not being encouraged, only professional urban capacity)
- would have to concentrate on diversification of prime industries (newsprint/sawnwood) to respond to market demands

Responses

- negative:
 - retirement-based (older) population
 - increased out-migration
 - conflict over privatization (fights over rights of access)
 - transition period for changes to industry (lack of investment \$)
- positive:
 - increased investment in emerging industries - finding the NL niche
 - new approaches to forest utilization - diverse labour opportunities in emerging markets
 - NTFP markets - increased cottage industries, improving rural sustainability
 - response to transportation issues
 - increased value-added manufacturing of timber into meeting market niches
 - more importation of trades people

Scenario B - Peace in the Woods

Inconsistencies

- disconnect - communitarianism vs. nuclear power?
- more international travel and trade would lead to more invasive species
- advanced technology will attract more people to urban centres, not support proliferation and growth of small towns
- demographics - NL will experience greater urban concentration in regional clusters
- if the world is peaceful, will so much immigration continue?
- lower incomes are incompatible with global peace
- if Asia becomes the centre of commerce, Canadian exports to there could be much higher than 9% increased (however, Russia may be able to service the increased demand)
- 35% PAs too high - impossible to manage

Important Messages

- good news!
- diverse outcomes/impacts across Canada
- water rights?
- industrial fortunes down (or, rather, shifted)
- connects to today's pressures)

- opportunities for niche products and diversification
- roundwood still a major world commodity
- broadening use of forests
- implications for road access - is tourism paying for access?
- emphasis on local empowerment

Implications for NL

- more demonstration of community-based forests
- preparing NLers for inevitable change (turmoil of and vulnerability during the transition)
- social impacts - lots of transitional pain
- lost connections to rural lifestyle (e.g., way less domestic cutting)
- regional cooperation (towns/villages coming together)

Responses

- strong land-use planning
- people might initially resist and try to hang on, but they will adapt
- today, people embrace change a little easier
- Aboriginal groups springing up on the Island
- embrace tourism opportunities
- upon reflection, many would see the scenario as welcome
- desirable but not feasible - "dots don't all connect up"
- some love it, some hate it (a fearful scenario)

Scenario C - Turbulence in the Woods

Inconsistencies

- people will NOT disregard forest condition
- neo-feudal timber barons could not emerge
- global insecurity and buoyant economy
- snow reduction too large

Important Messages

- overly pessimistic - too many worst-case outcomes (perfect storm)
- bioenergy
- very serious trends happening

Implications for NL

- opportunities for biomass energy
- air pollution
- climate change not so bad (relatively speaking)
- changes in NL economy - more problems in fisheries, less tourism
- concept of "republic of AB" brought to NL
- more civil disobedience, both Aboriginal and non-Ab

Responses

- political forces mobilized to prevent the nasty environmental trends
- capture market opportunities - bioenergy and changes in paper consumption
- people are seeing this scenario unfolding now, and are responding
- efforts to repatriate NL citizens and attract immigrants
- taking action to secure economic development for both Ab and non-Ab communities (but this will depend on continuing NL prosperity)

Scenario D - Restoration in the Woods

Inconsistencies

- soil - decomposition rates?
- demographics - inhabited forests and increased forest products should result in more conflict, so the scenario should include a little more social stress in forested areas
- demographics - affordable gasoline leads to increased commuting, but why then a permeation of the inhabited forest? If one lives in the forest, one could commute to urban centres or work opportunities
- global forest products - climate change should have reduced timber supply but should increase gross forest productivity (change “growth rates” to “supply”; forests are not responding to CC where gross productivity goes up but net productivity goes down due to natural disturbances
- current trends see decreases in oil/gas availability worldwide - new oil finds? So, are supplies more abundant, or is it more efficient use with alternative energy compensation?

Important Messages

- loss of traditional industries due to forest health and not international demand
- work in forest restoration (oil \$\$)
- polluter/user-pays concept implemented (non-renewables \$\$ for restoration of renewables)
- scenario is unsustainable - huge \$\$ and ecological challenges; how can communities be happy with a decrease in societal values?
- increase in NTFPs (cottage industries)

Implications for NL

- survival of livelihood - major amount of replacement economic activity in rural areas (cottage industries won't replace major industries)
- very traditionally dependent on newsprint/sawnwood commodities
- increase in recreational/eco-tourism opportunities
- larger ecological footprint on remote areas
- more viewshed conflicts
- NL activities dependent on water-based activities
- under-developed agricultural technologies and advancement
- large impact on rural labour markets unless there is investment in economic diversification
- communitarianism survives on hope

Responses

- negative:
 - silviculture is not a sustainable option for rural employment
 - increase in seasonality of jobs means more out-migration for full-time employment
 - difficulty to get funding for economic diversification
- positive:
 - evolve into implementation of community-based forest networks/co-ops/councils
 - view of forest value should increase
 - more Labrador investment in manufactured wood products due to quality and density of fibre (e.g., quake-resistant wood trusses)

Scenario D - Restoration in the Woods

Inconsistencies

- why would companies spend on forest restoration, which is driven by government policy?
- increased birth rate??
- altruistic but where will the required \$\$ come from?

Important Messages

- unpleasant transition but could arrive at a state of willingness to cooperate
- all are equally poor, and everyone is miserable together
- if industry is down, why are we investing in forest restoration? What source of \$\$?
- traditional silviculture jobs vs. restoration jobs - what difference?
- urban tax \$\$ flowing to forest development - shows support for rural economy, but is this “make work in rural areas” (e.g., planting in burns, beetle kills, etc.)?
- restoration for multiple values, but not necessarily fibre

Implications for NL

- traditional large-company industry is gone
- political will to shift Crown land to local groups
- big questions about ability of SME to function locally
- local recreation, NTFPs

Responses

- is there residual local initiative to stimulate local activity - capacity to respond, link to demographics?