

Upper Columbia Valley Community Forest

Prospectus

April 15, 2009

Rick Hoar

Rory Hromadnik

Steve Ostrander

VISION STATEMENT

Land managed locally for social, ecological, economic and spiritual sustainability resulting in both monetary and non-monetary benefits for the community.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Our intent in presenting this prospectus is to share our thoughts and to outline the tasks required to establish a Community Forest for the upper reaches of the Columbia Valley. The approach presented herein has been developed through reviews and discussions with other Community Forest groups. In addition, we have frequently referred to The Community Forest Guidebook for critical information regarding the development and management of Community Forests.

If one were to try to come up with definitions of a Community Forest they would be as varied as the communities having them both around British Columbia and the world. Yes the Community Forest concept is embraced globally! While each community has found their own definitions that reflect their own unique conditions they also share commonality with the others. Indeed, government's stated intention to provide "local control over forests for local benefit" is a common objective, which we embrace wholeheartedly. The "local benefits" we envision include: Management and utilization of non-timber forest products.

- Employment of silviculture treatments that is more sensitive to local priorities and objectives.
- Scheduling of forest operations such that their timing and location better meet local priorities and objectives.
- Pursuance of opportunities for value added wood processing.
- Generation of local employment.
- Increased participation by the general public and local citizens in forest management.

2.0 PROPOSED APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

Obtaining and developing a Community Forest is a significant undertaking that can take several years and substantial funding to complete. Strong community support is required. In addition, time, money and volunteers must be managed as efficiently as possible throughout the process. A master plan will be developed early on and will be critical for providing guidance through the various steps toward establishing a community forest.

The process for establishing a community forest can be described in four phases. First is the “preliminary research and development” phase where support by the community is assessed and processes are established for community participation. This phase involves everyone in the community and will take at least one year to complete. Other activities during this first phase will include forming partnerships, establishing organizational structure and securing financing.

The key features of community support that we will seek to establish are:

- Passion,
- Leadership,
- First Nations participation,
- A sense of community,
- Pragmatism,
- Local knowledge
- Holistic viewpoint

The second phase will build on the success of the first and will put into place partnerships, organizational structures and financing. Also at this stage, community involvement in strategic planning will be a priority. A critical part of this phase will be the preparation of proposals for securing Forest Tenure. This will be done through negotiations with the Provincial Government and, possibly, private landowners.

The third phase will focus on finalizing tenure and the completion of forest management plans. Community involvement will continue to be significant through this third phase, playing a key role in the preparation of strategic plans, forest management plans and more detailed operational plans.

Activities to be undertaken during the fourth and final phase will include:

- Hiring of staff.
- Finalization of policy.
- Establishment of procedures for community involvement in ongoing management activities.
- Finalization of management plans.
- Implementation of an evaluation plan to track progress and assure continuous improvement.
- Preparation of forest development plans and forest stewardship plans.
- Field engineering including the location of control points, roads and cut blocks.
- Preparation of operational site plans.
- Securing of authority to undertake specific activities including timber harvesting.

The entire process is expected to take upwards of three years to complete. Phases 1 and 2 will take at least two years. After completion of phase 2, it is expected that at least one more year will be required to complete phases 3 and 4.

2.1 PHASE ONE

PARTNERSHIP & INFRASTRUCTURE

The activities undertaken in this phase will assess community support and establish processes for participation by the community. Activities will also be undertaken to initiate development of infrastructures including partnerships, administrative authorities, funding sources and management plans. This phase will take six months to one year to complete and will include the following tasks:

- Discussions with key stakeholders that are part of the community, who share the vision for a community forest, are willing to support a community forest concept and who may have the desire to provide financial support for start-up costs. Some or all of these stakeholders may become partners.
- Establishment of a planning or central oversight group to lead in forming partnerships, setting up organizational structures and developing procedures for community involvement.
- Development of a Master Plan that builds on the experiences of others engaged in community forestry and is consistent with regulatory requirements.
- Developing community participation processes that assure relevant participation by the public and are inclusive, transparent, and trust based.

2.2 PHASE TWO

DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING

This phase is expected to take one year to complete, following Phase one. Building on the initial phase, this second phase will see completion of a Master Plan, which will establish organizational structures, procedures, budgets and operational plans. An executive summary will then be prepared and submitted to the Provincial Government toward securing a community forest agreement and suitable tenure.

Activities to be undertaken during Phase 2 include:

- Finalization of Partnership Agreements.
- Finalization of the administrative authority and organizational structure. Types of board structures to consider include Corporation, Society and Co-operative organizations.
- Preparation of the final master plan and submission of an executive summary to the Minister of Forests.
- Implementation of public participation processes for community consultation and involvement.
- Preparation of a draft forest management plan.
- Sources of financing identified and secured.
- Policy and guidelines developed and implemented.

2.3 PHASE THREE

SECURING FOREST TENURE

The third phase will focus on securing a Community Forest Agreement (CFA) or alternative form of community forest agreement with the Provincial government and, possibly, with private landowners. In addition, forest tenure of types that are consistent with the forest management objectives will be negotiated and secured during this phase. Focus will continue to be on relevant, open and transparent community participation during this phase and throughout the term of a community forest.

Other opportunities for tenure include First Nations, private land holdings and possibly even tenure purchases. Completion of this third phase is expected to take 8 months, following completion of Phase Two.

Activities to be undertaken during Phase 3 include:

- Negotiations with the Provincial government, first Nations and any relevant private parties towards establishment of the community forest and the securing of appropriate tenure.
- Community involvement and consultation featuring relevant, open, and transparent participation to be maintained throughout this phase. Volunteer assistance to be considered and used where possible.

2.4 Phase Four

INITIAL DEVELOPMENT

During the fourth and final phase, infrastructures will be finalized and operational management plans will be completed. Authority to undertake operational activities under secured tenure will be in place by the end of this phase

Activities to be undertaken during Phase 4 include:

- Policy development to guide management of the organization and of the Community Forest. Policy format and important areas of policy need will be discussed and formulated.
- Community consultation and involvement.
- Hiring of staff for general management, office administration and field/technical activities
- Completion of Forest Development and Forest Stewardship Plans.
- Completion of an Evaluation and Monitoring Plan.
- Initial engineering fieldwork for preparation of operational plans including locations of roads and block boundaries.
- Site plans prepared and finalized as required.
- Cutting and Road Permits developed and submitted for approval by Forest Service. As well any other permits acquired for other uses identified and to be developed at this time.

3.0 SCHEDULING

The undertaking of creating a Community Forest can proceed immediately with the formation of a partnership group within the community. We anticipate each of the phases would be completed within the following time frames:

Phase One	January – December 2009
Phase Two	July 2009 – December 2010
Phase Three	June 2010 – June 2011
Phase Four	January 2011 – December 2011

4.0 PARTNERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY

In accepting the obligation of taking on a partnership role for the Community Forest, one shares a desire to obtain local forest tenure to be managed as a Community Forest; plan and make decisions based on the greater good for the Community Forest; acknowledges the responsibility of raising sufficient funds and work collectively in an entrepreneurial spirit of developing and managing a Community Forest.

4.1 Initial Financial Responsibility

With every new venture there are start-up costs and for a Community Forest it is no different. The concept of the community considering and investing in such a project requires initial expenses similar to any new business and some very specific.

The BC Community Forest Association has been very helpful in identifying the Preliminary Research & Investigation a new group will encounter. These include:

- A) Ground Work
 - Visit other community forests
 - Research and contact development (phone call, etc.)

- B) Preliminary Meetings
 - Advertising, hall rentals, guest speakers
 - Maps and resource material
 - Meeting with government, resource users, stakeholders

- C) Feasibility Study is optional but in some cases needed

These preliminary costs have been estimated at \$15,000 - \$20,000. This amount would satisfy Phase 1 and most of if not all of Phase 2. In considering a partnership arrangement by key stakeholders in the community, the expectation is the partners would equally share this cost. It would as well show the community they are investing in the Community Forest. Should an alternative governance model be selected then this initial capital would have to be raised by various means including grants, fundraising and borrowing. For an overall budget on setup cost for a community forest as prepared by the BC Community Forest Association, see Appendix.

5.0 STUDY AREA

Our community forest Study Area as shown on the attached map has been determined on the basis of 5 criteria:

1. Comprises a watershed that is important to the community.
2. Comprises view-scapes which are critical to or highly valued by the community
3. Comprises fire interface forests whose management could have significant bearing on the communities wildfire risk
4. Directly adjacent to the community or for which the community partners feel a sense of connection and stewardship; and
5. Is capable of supporting the community's intended use over the long term.

This study area will be subject to further review to ensure that it meets the above criteria and to ensure that no existing stakeholders are unduly impacted. It is expected that the study area will evolve during the initial phases of this process as we develop partners and identify potential conflicts with stakeholders.