

Community Forest Governance

As with any organization there must be some form of management or governance in place, in order to keep it on track and show accountability. For community forests presently operating within BC there are 5 models being used. When discussions are being held in the communities by the Steering Committee we would like to hear your preferences if we are to have a community forest.

Corporate is a legal entity formed under the Company Act. Corporations have a corporate charter which outlines the number of shares and information about the shareholders. As well rules of conduct, rights and restrictions are laid out. A corporation is made up of shareholders, directors and officers. The corporation can borrow money, own assets and perform business functions without directly involving the shareholders. The Creston Community Forest operates under a corporate structure.

Society is a not-for-profit organization incorporated under the Society Act. It is recognized as an individual while remaining separate and distinct from its members. Societies are incorporated under the BC Society Act. The Board of Directors cannot be paid however directors working for the society can receive pay for specific contracted work. All funds and/or profits can only be used for the purposes spelled out in the society's constitution. A society has a constitution and by-laws which are registered under the Society Act that establish the purpose of the Society, rules of conduct and administration. The Kaslo and District Community Forest operates as a society.

Co-operative is collectively owned and democratically controlled by its members. Membership is gained voluntarily and is open. A co-operative is incorporated with a corporate name, which is used for business purposes. Each member owns one share and cast one vote at co-operative meetings where the membership is required to vote. Co-operatives have a Board of Directors elected by the members as well as an executive structured from the board. The Harrop-Proctor Community Forest is a co-operative.

First Nations are sometimes full partners in a community forest or may have their own community forest. Wholly owned ones are administered through a separate company owned by the First Nation. The Ktunaxa Nation Community Forest south of Cranbrook is operated as such.

Municipal Department/Corporation is one of the oldest community forest models around, with some operating on private land owned by the municipality and others operating on a combination of municipal and provincial lands. Regardless of whether it is run under a department or corporation reporting is done directly to Mayor and Council. The City of Revelstoke operates its own community forest.

The next newsletter will answer frequently asked questions. Check us out at www.chwcf.com.

