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SLIDES: Harrop-Procter Community Forest

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Harrop-Procter Community Forest

Ramona Faust, General Manager
Understanding the Issues...

- Location
- Population and Governance
- Forest Development
Location

- The Harrop-Procter Community Forest is 10,800 hectares of Crown (government) forestland located in the Southern Interior of British Columbia Canada on Kootenay Lake.
- It’s north of Sandpoint Idaho
- It shares species at risk with the United States. The Stagleap Caribou Herd and the Selkirk Grizzly population range this far north.
Regional Map
Harrop-Procter

- The communities of Harrop and Procter are situated along a 10-mile stretch of valley bottomland on the South Shore of the West Arm of Kootenay Lake.
Population and Governance cont.

- The area is home to 630 people.
- Families are a strong component of the population with 450 adults and the remainder children under 19.
- There are 250 residences, most of which are small and medium size acreages.
- The population increases substantially in the summer.
Creek Fed Water Systems

- Approximately 90% of the households rely on gravity fed water systems originating in the many creeks and streams that line the steep forested mountains above the homesteads.
Hobby Farming is common
Since 1976 the community has been involved in forest stewardship by trying to participate in forestland decisions in order to preserve their quality of life.

Two decades of interaction with the Ministry of Forests and logging companies prompted the community forest initiative as a natural evolution to asking for involvement in logging plans.
Community Stake Hold cont.

- Support for the community forest is a grass-roots initiative.
- Support for the community forest initiative is broad based through age and professional groups.
Community Forest Development

- The Harrop-Procter Watershed Protection Society was elected at a community meeting in 1996 to investigate options for land stewardship.

- The community forest concept was conceived in 1997 as a solution for land-use conflicts that came to a head in the early part of the decade.
Lasca Creek Protests 1991
Community Forest Dev. cont.

The community was surveyed to determine if they preferred:

- outright preservation of the forest,
- status quo logging,
- a community run business that would respect all forest values.
Community Forest Dev. cont.

- The community voted 51% in favor of a community run forest and value-added business.

- The residents embraced the concept of Ecosystem–based planning and engaged the Silva Forest Foundation to assist in planning and mapping in the community forest.
Exploring the Possibilities…

How did we do it?

- 3 years of intense community education.
- Constituency building in Harrop-Procter.
- Constituency building in the Region and among innovative forestry practitioners.
- Political lobbying with many other communities that wanted more control of their economic and environmental future.
What Were the Results?

- In 1998 the BC Government issued a province-wide request for proposals for 3 community forest pilot projects.
- There were 87 interested communities and 27 submitted full proposals.
Community Forest Proposal

The proposal categories were weighted to reflect government priorities and contained a requirement for:

- A business plan.
- A forest management plan.
- Community and stakeholder approval.
- First Nations approval
- A land base available with an allowable annual cut agreed upon by the District Manager of the Ministry of Forests.
Community Forest Pilot Agreement Granted

- The government granted 7 community forest pilot agreements under a five-year probationary term in 1999.
- Harrop-Procter was one of the first seven agreements granted.
- We signed our forest agreement in 2000 and became operational in 2001 after completing 5 required permits.
Making It Work…

What makes community forests different?

- Managed by the community.
- Close in proximity to the community which derives economic and other benefits from the forest.
- Every community forest has a unique governance structure. The Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative manages the community forest.
Area Based Agreements

- The community forest pilot agreements are based on carrying out forestry and other activities on a specified area of land in perpetuity.

- Woodlot licenses and Tree Farm licenses are structured in a similar fashion.

- Although community based tenures were allowed to determine the amount of timber they will cut, they are still under obligation to harvest a specific amount within a five year period.
Other Forms of Tenure

- Volume-Based Licenses are the other form of tenure in B.C. Companies are assigned “operating areas” within a designated Timber Supply Area. It is assumed that a forest licensee can harvest a specific volume of timber over a long period of time somewhere within the Timber Supply Area. This form of allocation is based on an Allowable Annual Cut.

- These “operating areas” and allowable annual cut can be reassigned at the Ministry of Forest’s district manager’s discretion to reflect changing government and social priorities.
Community Forest Production

- Due to steep terrain and thin and unstable soils in the Harrop-Procter Community Forest only 13% of the 10,800 hectares is assessed to be operable at this time.
- Further fieldwork is necessary to confirm if more area might be available to timber harvesting.
- The community forest produces 2601 cubic meters of timber per year or 13,005 cubic meters in 5 years.
Community Forest Production cont.

- This is a small volume of timber compared to the land base.
- It is a politically divisive issue within the District Ministry of Forest Office and the industrial forest companies.
- The Ministry of Forests determined they would recommend a cut 3 to 4 times more than the Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative is willing to risk at this time due to complex terrain.
Business Strategy

For the Harrop-Procter Community Co-operative a small revenue base has meant a commitment to strategic business planning:

- Sort logs to their highest value. There are 7 commercial species in the Harrop-Procter Community Forest.
- Diversify into lumber and value-added products.
- Be frugal and creative with finding funding sources and patient lenders. Community forests are not funded by government unless they are governed by a municipal or regional government.
Value-Added Products
Value Added Products cont.
Business Strategy cont.

- Managing human resources seasonally.
- Forest Stewardship Council Certification assures the community that environmental goals are being met and provides a market niche necessary for a small business.
- An organic herb farm and value-added product project was initiated but downscaled due to internal capacity. Non-timber forest products are integrated into this business section.
Business Performance

- The Harrop-Procter Community Forest has produced 11,500 cubic meters of timber,
- 500,000 board feet of assorted lumber and building products have been produced by contracting and outsourcing sawing, planing and drying.
- Herbal products are sold locally, in Toronto, Ontario and other locations.

Product sales in all businesses have increased incrementally each year however financial success is still tenuous due to high start-up and overhead costs.
Sunshine Bay Botanicals
Other Forest Activities

The Harrop-Procter Watershed Protection Society has contributed:

- research,
- community outreach,
- and a youth mentorship program to the project.
Youth Mentorship Program
Research Projects include:

- Water monitoring
Research Projects cont.

- non-timber forest products sustainability trials,
- forest stand composition monitoring,
- fish habitat and population studies,
- hydrologic assessment,
- ungulate and grizzly bear habitat potential,
Research Projects cont.

- archeological impact assessments and
- wildlife habitat recruitment surveys

Recreation:

- Two hiking trails have been restored and maintained.
Facing the Challenges

- Weather
- Forest Fires
- Learning curve in the forest industry
- Softwood lumber dispute with the U.S.
Challenges cont.

- Volatile log market.
- The nature of a volunteer governed community run business.
- A land base without roads means costs will be high for the first 15 years of operations.
Current Challenges

- Recently the community forest pilot agreement was extended for another 5 years.
- The community was hoping for 25-year long-term agreement to stimulate investment and provide long-term possibilities in forest planning.
- Log prices are currently abysmal, creating the need for producing more value-added products for economic security.
Current Challenges cont.

- Mountain Pine Beetle outbreaks are expected within the next 15 years and the Ministry of Forests are pushing the community co-operative to develop access routes and harvest lodgepole pine leading stands.
- The co-operative recognizes the values that may be jeopardized by both pine mortality and an accelerated harvest.
- This will require harvesting other timber species at an accelerated pace to balance harvesting pine which is a low-value species.
Goals for the Future

- Goals are to reduce debt and purchase or lease land and start a small value-added business park in order to expand community employment and financial return from our timber.

- We would like to continue to mentor and model community forestry and learn from others who have taken on this daunting and rewarding challenge.
Wish Us Luck!!!