

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK TOWARDS A DESIRED FUTURE FOREST CONDITION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context

- ❖ There is growing consensus that the global climate is warming and likely to accelerate during the 21st century at an unprecedented rate with expected significant changes to species and ecosystem distribution, and the range and impact of many forest pests and diseases.
- ❖ British Columbia is currently experiencing the largest recorded mountain pine beetle outbreak in North America. This forest health epidemic is causing widespread mortality of lodgepole pine, which is impacting the stability and long-term economic well-being of many communities.
- ❖ International market forces, a struggling forest industry, and increasing public concern regarding sustainable forest management, continue to challenge the B.C. forest sector.
- ❖ Addressing these challenges requires a long-term strategic approach to forest land management.

1.2. Existing Instruments

- ❖ British Columbia has a good foundation of strategic land use plans with approximately 90% of the province currently covered by government approved higher level land and resource management plans (RLUP and LRMP).
- ❖ British Columbia also has a comprehensive legislative and policy regime that regulates forest practices. However, there is a gap in strategic planning between the higher level plans and operational plans.
- ❖ The current forest management framework also includes Sustainable Forest Management Plans (SFMPs) for many licensees that lay the foundation for achieving sustainable forest management. These are neither a legislated planning requirement in BC nor a mechanism used to overtly address the strategic planning gap.
- ❖ A number of pilot initiatives have occurred over the last decade that can provide valuable lessons regarding sustainable and enhanced forest management and the building of positive working relationships (e.g. IFPA, DFAM, EFMPPs, Code Pilots, etc).

1.3. Issues

- ❖ Climate change, sustainability and cumulative impacts
 - Given the reality of climate change and MPB and the apparent vulnerability of forests to other ecological, economic and social circumstances, it is prudent that forest managers begin to develop integrated, adaptive strategies and plans to minimize the risks and maximize the benefits of these circumstances.

- ❖ Integrated strategic forest management planning
 - The provincial Timber Harvesting Land Base (THLB) is constantly under pressure and scrutiny from various competing interests, agencies, and issues (e.g. land use (oil & gas), environmental (EBM), forest health (MPB));
 - To maintain and enhance their social license, the forest sector needs a mechanism to demonstrate how the current and future forest management challenges will be addressed.
 - It has been identified through the Future Forest Ecosystems workshop and the Forest Practices Board review of FSPs that there is a need to address a strategic planning gap between higher level plans (e.g. RLUP, LRMPs) and more operational plans such as FSPs.

2. Overview of the Future Forest Strategy

In considering the various factors that Section 8 of the Forest Act requires the Chief Forester to take into account in determining AACs, the Chief Forester attempts to reflect as closely as possible operability and forest management factors that are a reasonable extrapolation from current practices. Current management practices are defined by the specifications in forest management plans and strategies for management units including guidelines for the protection of forest resources, legislation and official land-use decisions.

The Future Forest Strategy endeavors to articulate the vision of what the desired forest condition is to be towards ensuring / mitigating more resilience to ecological, economic and/or social issues and / or drivers such as climate change, transition from old growth to second growth stands, and mountain pine beetle. The application of an issues / drivers lens to the desired future forest vision will provide the information that informs existing strategies, the need for new strategies and scenarios, and potential “gaps” that need to be addressed.

Ultimately the FFS document can:

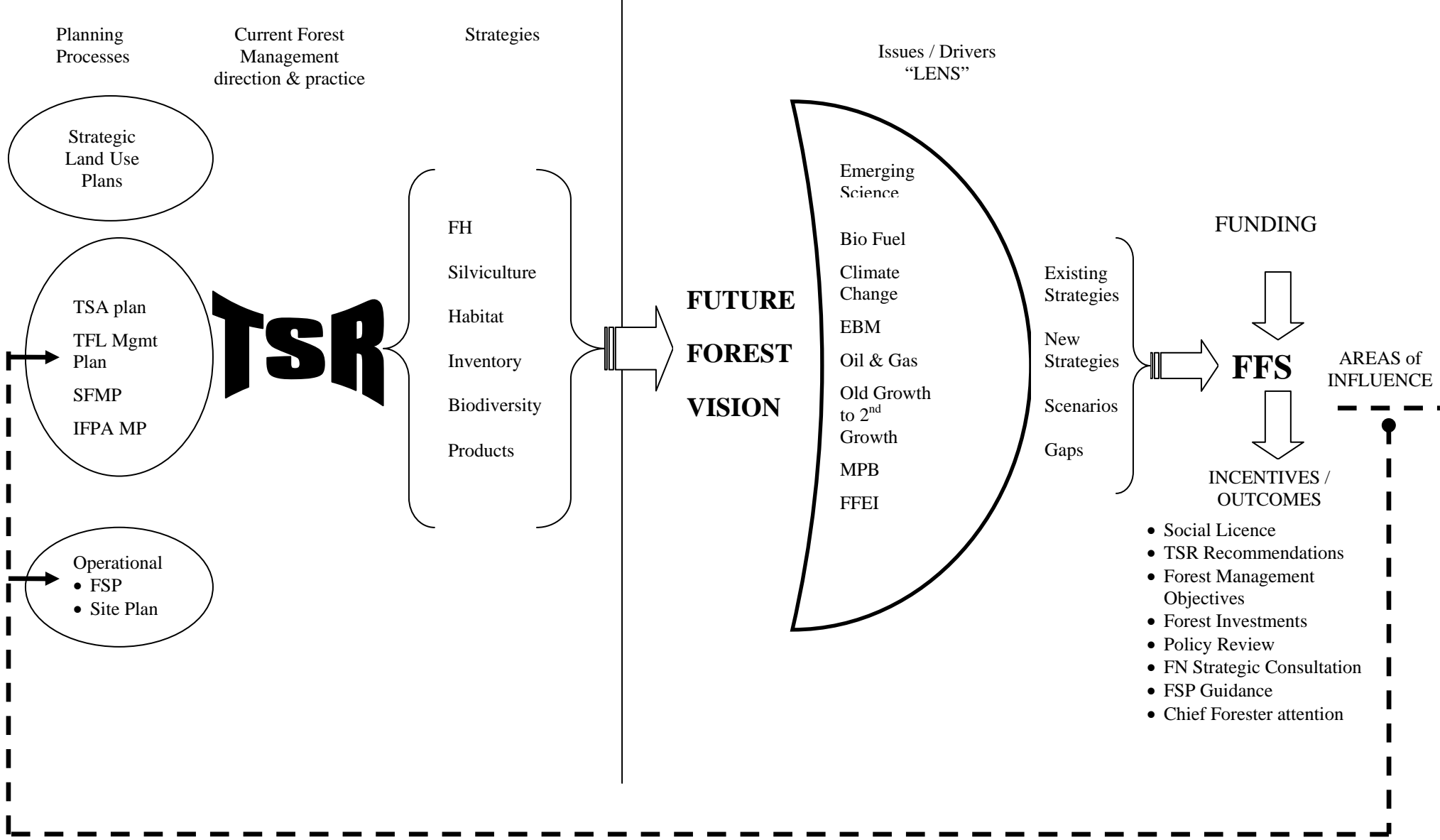
- guide forest landbase investments, and influence silviculture treatments, research activities, FIA LBIP activities, forest inventory priorities,
- FN information sharing at a strategic level, as well as
- inform future development of SFMPs, FSPs TSR, and FIA Land Base Investment Rationales (LBIRs).
- identify the need for potential changes to forest management policies relative to achieving the objectives outlined for the future forest strategy.

The effectiveness of a future forest strategy is dependent upon a **commitment** by companies and government to its collaborative development and use in other relevant forest management decisions (e.g. FSP development and approvals, TSR and AAC determinations, FIA funding, TFL management plan, etc).

Figure 1: Overview of Future Forest Strategies

Current Forest Condition

Future Forest Condition



3. A RECOMMENDED FRAMEWORK

3.1. Vision

Future forest strategies for the province that ensures sustainability and global competitiveness.

3.2. Goal

Collaborative strategy that guides forest management activities and investments for a given land area towards a diversified, resilient future forest that provides appropriate goods and services.

3.3. Objectives

3.3.1. Demonstrate sustainable forest management practices to the public and corporate customers:

- a) as a tool in the management of the forest resources on a defined management area (e.g. TFL, TSA, or multiples of same)
- b) through a clearly articulated desired future forest condition that describes a proactive approach towards ensuring/mitigating future forests to be more resilient to climate change and other ecological, economic and/or social circumstances
- c) by building on lessons learned from previous pilots such as Code Pilots, EFMPPs, IFPAs and DFAM)
- d) through managing and utilizing a results based concept when developing a future forest strategy (i.e. no one size fits all) across the province
- e) by reducing the pressure and focus on FSPs to deliver sustainable forest management and remain consistent with the model that guided FRPA development

3.3.2. Develop future forest strategies that guide forest managers toward a sustainable timber supply by:

- a) evaluating and incorporating emerging scientific findings applicable to current forest practices
- b) informing future AAC determinations
- c) influencing forest land base investments and silviculture treatments, research activities and priorities, FIA-LBIP activities, forest inventory priorities, First Nations information sharing at a strategic level, future development of FSPs and FIA Land Base Investment Rationales (LBIRs)
- d) encouraging innovation, challenge the status quo, and include supportive science and/or expert opinion for variations from existing forest management objectives
- e) building on existing instruments (e.g. timber supply reviews, silviculture strategies) and only involve new analyses where critical gaps are identified
- f) having the support of key stakeholders, First Nations on whose territory the plan is prepared, MoFR District Manager, MoE, BCTS and the major licensee(s)
- g) using existing data and commit the participants to updating the data and knowledge base in priority areas over time and within available funding
- h) demonstrating spatially and temporally (e.g. 50-100yrs), the movement towards a sustainable and resilient forest condition on a defined management area
- i) including a monitoring and adaptive management system to measure progress and adjust management practices to meet the stated goals and targets

- j) being a dynamic guiding document revisited locally on annual basis and revised in consultation with the Chief Forester every 5 – 10 years possibly in conjunction with TSR
- k) providing input into other forest management requirements such as third party certification, landscape level objectives, LRMP implementation, and conditions for timber sales
- l) giving context for the results and strategies and / or standards in future FSPs and helping provide context why new or other results and strategies are developed or included in FSPs
- m) being adequately funded for the pilot planning and strategy development components of the framework under the FIA

3.3.3. Inform the development or modification of current and future forest policy in support of a future forest strategy.

4. Proposed Next Steps

4.1. Establishment of a Provincial FFS Oversight Committee

The FFS Oversight Committee would be:

- a small governance structure made up of representatives from government and the forest industry;
- short term to assist in establishing a solid foundation for moving this initiative forward based on the pilot areas experiences; and
- ad hoc and informal.

The general roles and responsibilities of a provincial FFS Oversight Committee would be to oversee and provide direction as needed to the FFS initiative including to empower the implementation of the FFS; review and selection of pilot areas based on responses, monitor progress of the pilot areas; communicate findings on a provincial level; and carry forward any findings and/or recommendations from the pilot areas that will improve on the implementation of the FFS initiative provincially.

4.2. Communication to Broader Audience

Communication of the FFS initiative concept and framework will be required within the short term to ensure awareness within the MoFR regions (government and industry).

4.3. FFS Pilot Project Areas

Pilot areas will be established to put into practice the FFS concept and framework for the purpose of testing its applicability and functionality as well as identifying opportunities for improvements.

Proposed pilot areas are not compelled to align with current forest management unit boundaries (i.e. TFL / TSA) but must be similar in terms of current forest management direction and practices as well as issues / drivers affecting the forest land base.

An outline for submitting an expression of interest for a pilot area is provided in Appendix 1.

4.4. Development of the FFS

It is expected that the development of these strategies will be conducted as a technical exercise with flexibility to adjust the governance structure to fit the local situation but within the principles outlined in the Framework and resulting in a spatially and temporally explicit strategy. The major licensee or BCTS in the defined area is recommended to take the lead in developing the strategy but in collaboration with MoFR. A range of options exists relative to the involvement of First Nations and key stakeholders in the development of the strategic plan. This can be the direct involvement in the technical planning exercise or using consultation.

The FFS will apply to the total Crown forest area managed by the MoFR.

A proposed table of contents of what a FFS would include is provided in Appendix 2. The table of contents is meant only as a guide and open for discussion.

Appendix 1 – Guideline for Submitting an Expression of Interest to be a FFS Pilot Area

The Expression of Interest submitted should not be a lengthy proposal, approximately 4 or 5 pages in total.

1. Proponent
 - Organization and name
2. Description of Proposed Pilot Area. Example content may include but not limited to:
 - Area (TSA, TFL, combination of management units)
 - AAC
 - Licensees operating in the area
3. Major Issues / Drivers affecting the area. Example content may include but not limited to:
 - MPB and/or other forest health issues
 - Oil & Gas and/or other land use issues
 - Climate Change must be considered
 - Old Growth to second growth transition
 - Etc.
4. Factors supporting a successful FFS for the area. Example content may include but not limited to:
 - Collaborative structure exists between licensee & government (e.g. IFPA, TSA committees)
 - Currency of resource inventories
 - Existing strategies
 - Date of last TSR
5. Anticipated Benefits of a FFS to the area.
6. Proposed Structure and Project Management for the FFS including level of commitment. Example content may include but not limited to:
 - Lead proponent(s)
 - Governance structure (who will be involved / consulted)
 - Involvement of other Ministries / Agencies
 - Involvement of First Nations
 - Action plan

Appendix 2 - Proposed Content of a FFS

- A. Description of the FFS area
- B. Existing condition
 - i. Species
 - ii. Age class distribution
 - iii. Productivity
 - iv. Harvesting profile
 - v. Current products
- C. Forest management objectives
- D. Scenario building based objectives, assumptions, available data and existing strategies (e.g. climate change, fire, pests etc.)
- E. Desired Future Forest
 - i. Species
 - ii. Age class distribution
 - iii. Productivity
 - iv. Habitat Supply
 - v. Harvesting profile
 - vi. Future product potential
- F. Key success factors, measures and indicators
- G. Forest Management Practices
 - i. Harvesting
 - ii. Silviculture
- H. Adaptive management and monitoring
- I. Future resource information, research, and land base investment needs