

IN THIS BULLETIN

British Columbia's Ministry of Forests and Range (MFR) is preparing the next edition of the provincial, sustainable forest management (SFM) report *The State of BC's Forests*. The report will present long-term trends for a suite of SFM indicators and provide the ministry's assessment of the data. Information on the preparation of this report is provided in a series of State of Forest (SoF) bulletins. SoF Bulletin #1 (available at: <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/sof/index.htm>) provides a brief overview of the SoF project. In this bulletin (SoF Bulletin #2), the project manager provides his perspective on a few current project issues. The opinions expressed in this bulletin are those of the project manager.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

To maintain its relevance, British Columbia's SFM report must speak to important emerging issues – and climate change is the dominant sustainability issue of the day. The potential implications of climate change on the monitoring and assessment of SFM are truly staggering. Consistent with our guiding SFM criteria and indicator sets, aspects of the climate change issue that relate to forest carbon balance will be addressed in the next SoF report (in section #10 Greenhouse Gases). However, given the breadth and significance of the climate change issue, we have decided that this is not enough. To provide fuller treatment, we will add a chapter on climate change to the front section of the report. Tom Niemann, the former Manager of State of Forest Reporting and the current Manager of Climate Change and Forest Carbon, will guide the preparation of this material.

LEADERS FROM OTHER MINISTRIES

The MFR is the lead agency, and has the in-house expertise and data, for many of the issues addressed in the SoF report. However, for some issues the expertise and data reside in other ministries. To competently report on all facets of SFM, we need to engage staff from these other ministries. One notable feature of the current SoF effort is that we have successfully recruited staff from other ministries to lead the preparation of some report sections. Bill Marshall, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts, leads report section #16 Recreation. Brad Smith, Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, leads report section #20 Public Involvement. Natalie Suzuki, Ministry of Environment, leads report section #9 Air. Having topic leaders from many ministries diversifies and strengthens our SoF project team, allows us to access the data from many agencies, and connects us to networks of advisors most closely related to the topic at hand. We are grateful to our non-MFR topic leaders for their valuable contributions to the SoF project.

EVOLVING BEST PRACTICE

Best practice in national (and sub-national) SFM reporting is continuously evolving – and we are endeavouring to keep pace. In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution that identified seven thematic elements of SFM. We are exploring how to report against this new framework in the next edition of *The State of BC's Forests*. One promising option is to cross-reference our SoF indicators with the seven themes and then draw conclusions in each theme area. Such an

approach may help with the challenge of summarizing assessments over many indicators.

CONTINUING A TRADITION

While some aspects of the SoF work seem new and different, others seem very familiar. Compared to the forestry reports of previous decades, the SoF report is broader, to cover the many components of SFM. Nevertheless, the staff involved recognize the lineage and are proud to continue the long tradition of public reporting. The SoF work draws on many of our strengths, including our rich data sets and our ability to assemble a team that can cover the many dimensions of SFM. Relevant, reliable statistics and balanced, knowledgeable interpretation can improve resource management discussions and decision-making. Through SoF reporting, we provide a comprehensive picture of the state of SFM in BC. We see the provision of this information as a worthy endeavour and something we are well-positioned to do.

MORE EFFICIENT SOF REPORTING

With the release in 2007 of the 2nd edition of *The State of BC's Forests*, it was clear that SoF reporting had to become more efficient. In part to find these efficiencies, the way we organize ourselves to produce the report has been radically revamped. For the 3rd edition, individuals working in the areas addressed by the report have assumed responsibility for preparing sections of the report.

These individuals (the SoF topic leaders) will make SoF reporting more efficient by better aligning it with the standard ministry data sets, work processes, and reports. In addition, we expect efficiency gains from an increased emphasis on the use of simple indicators and readily available data. The long-term success of provincial SoF reporting depends, in part, on the timely, efficient production of SoF reports.

FORUM FOR SFM DISCUSSIONS

Work on the SoF project involves discussing what SFM means, how it can be characterized, SFM issues relevant to BC, and appropriate indicators, data portrayals, and interpretations. We engage in these discussions within the SoF project team, with our advisory groups, and with other stakeholders. Through these discussions, we influence others and are in turn influenced. We build and deepen our knowledge, capacity, and networks. Working on the next edition of *The State of BC's Forests* provides a unique opportunity to engage in these broad discussions.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the Project Manager, Patrick Martin (tel: 250-356-0305; e-mail: Pat.Martin@gov.bc.ca), or visit the SoF web site (<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/sof/index.htm>) if you would like more information.