



The Benefits of a Co-op Approach

Why is Growth and Yield (G&Y) important?

Just 25 years ago, G&Y was focused mainly on estimating merchantable volumes from cruises and inventories; predicting growth was of lesser concern. Greater interest in long-term timber supply forecasting emerged with the growing number of post-harvest regenerated stands. Improving our estimates of site productivity, managed stand growth and response to silvicultural treatments have now become crucial information needs for countering downward AAC pressures and guiding forest management investments. In addition, forest change monitoring has now gained attention relative to certification, international environmental standards (C&I) and sustainable forest management. G&Y also supports these initiatives by providing predictions of the stand structural attributes used to drive predictions of non-timber values, such as wildlife habitat, biodiversity, visual quality, watershed protection, etc. Our future claims to sustainability rest on our ability to predict and monitor forest growth and future yields of the timber and non-timber values important to society.

What makes a co-operative approach more efficient?

The existence of G&Y co-operatives around the world (two in Alberta) indicates that shared efficiencies are achievable. The nature of G&Y supports these efficiencies. G&Y is a science of prediction. Developing predictive models for complex biological systems requires data -- lots of data. The behavior of trees and forests reflect ecological and management conditions that commonly span administrative and political boundaries. Maintaining stand-alone G&Y programs for individual management units is not only expensive, it is often constrained by the limited range of stand conditions available for data collection. Pooling data across similar management units can increase cost efficiencies and sampling opportunities, which in turn produces more robust predictive models. Co-operatives play an important role in providing strategic coordination to help integrate sampling and modelling activities across management unit boundaries. Co-operatives also help facilitate the communication required for ultimate acceptance and application of the results.

What changes are increasing the co-op advantage in BC?

While our knowledge of G&Y in BC has improved over the last 10-15 years largely due to government investments, it is continually strained by the increasing complexity of forest management. The critical need for G&Y information about partial-cutting in the southern interior is a prime example. Historically, the BC Forest Service has taken a lead role in G&Y to produce the data and tools it needed to support its traditional responsibilities in inventory, silviculture and timber supply analysis. Unlike TFLs, the volume-based tenure system has provided little incentive for licensee involvement in G&Y. In recent years, government policy changes slowly began to shift delivery responsibility for inventory and silviculture to licensees. The current government has added timber supply analysis to this list and is moving rapidly to complete these shifts. At the same time, budget and staff reductions are having a major impact on its own G&Y program. The old centrally funded and coordinated government G&Y program is no longer being supported. Volume-based licensees, in particular, have had little experience with G&Y in the past. Given new G&Y-related responsibilities, they may find the co-operative approach is an attractive way to accelerate the learning curve and gain cost efficiencies.

How can SIGY help?

SIGY was created in 1999 when 20 licensees and the provincial government formed the Co-op under the BC Cooperative Association Act. The Co-op has an elected Board of Directors who sets priorities and oversees the activities of the General Manager. The original focus of the co-op was helping volume-based licensees coordinate G&Y investments to gain AAC benefits similar to TFLs. Recognizing they needed to be more knowledgeable about G&Y to make informed G&Y investment decisions, members directed the Co-op to facilitate communication and education, as well. The Co-op made considerable progress toward these goals last year (2001-02). A preliminary report assessing the G&Y status of each management unit relative to TSR, as well as SIGY's numerous communication and educational activities, are documented on the Co-op's website.

Recent government changes are increasing G&Y-related responsibilities, particularly for volume-based licensees. Everyone, including SIGY, is going to be operating in an entirely different G&Y environment. Similar to TFLs, IFPAs and DFAMs will provide some structure for coordinating G&Y projects within management units. However, a co-operative structure among management units of all types (including TFLs) would address the strategic coordination gaps left by disintegration of the centrally-coordinated government G&Y program. SIGY is well positioned to become a common venue for licensees and the government to establish cost-efficient joint standards and programs. In doing so, SIGY may broaden its relevance beyond just Forest License holders. This will help licensees prioritize G&Y investments to reduce the risk and uncertainty associated with the growing number of inventory, silviculture and planning responsibilities. By working together through SIGY, licensees and government can begin to generate efficiencies, encourage sound applications and foster joint acceptance of the results.

How is SIGY being funded this year?

SIGY's Workplan for 2002-03 outlines the Co-op's goals and activities. The Co-op will continue to focus on G&Y in TSAs and communication. West Fraser (Quesnel) is leading a FIA-LBIP project on behalf of SIGY, which will be funded through voluntary allocation transfers from SIGY members. Allocation transfer targets for each member licensee are based on \$0.014419 per cubic meter of AAC for member-held Replaceable Forest Licenses in the three southern interior Forest Regions. SIGY encourages its members to anticipate and support their allocation transfers.

SIGY's Member Share Holders (2002-03):

Adams Lake	Ainsworth	Atco	Bell Pole	Downie
Galloway	Gorman Bros.	J.H. Huscroft	Kalesnikoff	Lignum
Louisiana Pacific	Meadow Cr Cedar	Pope & Talbot	Riverside	Slocan
Tembec	Tolko	Weldwood	West Fraser	Wynndel Box
Crown Ministries				

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