Project #: S084019

Project Title: A Critical Review and Analysis of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK) Research to Improve Provincial Mechanisms for its Incorporation in Forest Management

Project purpose and management implications:
Forest managers and policy-makers need to improve the participation of Aboriginal peoples in forest management. More effective incorporation of Indigenous Traditional Knowledge in forest management will contribute to sustainable forest management by protecting Aboriginal values and land uses and ensuring this knowledge informs conservation biology, ecosystem-based and watershed management and an understanding of forest dynamics, especially forest management impacts on non-timber forest values. There is now a large body of studies on ITK that has been conducted through non-governmental organizations like the National Aboriginal Forestry Association (Bombay et al. 1996), provincially-based organizations like the University of Northern BC (Hawley et al. 2004), and national-level organizations like the Sustainable Forest Management Network (Stevenson 2005) and the Canadian Forest Service. Numerous authors have provided good overviews of the value of and challenges in applying ITK in western science-based regimes (Berkes 1999, Colfer et al. 2005, McGregor 2004, Menzies 2006, Nadasdy 2003, Usher 2000). Currently, no synthesis or critical analysis of this large body of research has been completed. This project will carry out such a synthesis analyzing the existing body of ITK research and comparing how provincial jurisdictions currently address the incorporation of ITK in forest management planning in three areas: 1) the Forest Science Program themes mentioned above—Theme 1.0, Ecosystem Based Management and Conservation Biology, Theme 3.0 Watershed Management and Theme 4.0 Forest Dynamics; 2) the protection of Aboriginal values and land uses and 3) consultation approaches, the means by which the province interacts with Aboriginal communities in forest management. Additionally, the project will identify Aboriginal peoples’ aspirations in these two areas to analyze the gap between what Aboriginal people want and current government practices. Recommendations for addressing this gap will provide direction for more effectively accommodating Aboriginal peoples’ values and land uses in forest management. This synthesis will provide practical direction to policymakers, forest managers, researchers and Aboriginal peoples to improve how Aboriginal issues are addressed in forest management. Key to this practical direction will be the development of extension notes for practitioners (forest managers and Aboriginal communities) and the exploration of the feasibility of a searchable database of current research and best practice case studies. This project will complement the existing body of knowledge on ITK, by providing a practical focus for forest practitioners, using the analysis to make recommendations for more effective provincial approaches.
Project start date: April 1, 2007. This project started with a team meeting in Vancouver in April 2007, but because of a delay in having the Recipient Agreement signed between BCFSP and the BC First Nations Forestry Council, the proponent, continued work on the project was delayed until February 2008.

Length of project: To March 2009.

Methodology overview:
The first quarter of the project involved:
- Coordination of software and technical support for the project;
- The development of a framework for meta-analysis;
- Identification of case studies for in-depth analysis; and
- Project team meeting, held in April 2007 in Vancouver.

Project scope and regional applicability: National in scope, with focus on application of ITK in British Columbia.

Any interim conclusions, inference or information that might be immediately useful to forest practitioners and other researchers:

As part of the project, an ongoing literature review is being conducted and a database of sources is being built. The Forestry Chronicle published a synthesis article that provides some description of case studies chosen for this project, including the Waswanipi Cree Model Forest, the Little Red River Cree Nation, and Tl’azt’en Nation’s work with the University of Northern B.C. on the Aboriginal Forest Planning Process. See: Cheveau, M., L. Imbeau, P. Drapeau and P. Belanger. 2008. Current status and future directions of traditional ecological knowledge in forest management: A review. Forestry Chronicle 84(2): 231-243.

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