An Analysis of Silviculture Employment under FRDA
FRDA Report 067

This report provides a profile of silviculture contractors, other than tree planters, working under FRDA contracts during the fall season of 1988. The survey is a follow-up to a survey of tree planters carried out in 1985, and although two tree planting contracts are included in this survey, the balance of 142 contracts is made up of juvenile spacing (57), brushing and weeding (40), site rehabilitation and preparation (30), conifer release (4), and fertilization (1) contracts. A total of 307 silvicultural workers participated in the survey which consisted of:

- mailed questionnaires,
- telephone interviews, and;
- on-site field interviews.

A representative mix of contract types and regional coverage was achieved. The typical contract, excluding fertilization, is 84 hectares in size and has a bid price of $39,100 (an average price of $465 per hectare). Silviculture contractors rely on FRDA contracts for 54.8% of their silviculture income, on average. The average crew size was 8.4 per project.

Contracts are clearly labor intensive - nearly 80 cents of every contract dollar is spent on wages and wage related costs. Equipment and supplies consume 15 cents, considerably higher than the 3.8 cents spent by tree planting contractors in the 1985 study.

Crew workers claim 75% of the wage bill, with supervisors next at 15.5%. Supervision costs are highest for chemical brushing and weeding contracts and lowest for conifer release projects. Wages paid to cooks and helpers constitute 1.70% of total payroll costs.

Crew members are predominantly male, in the 21-30 yr. age group with limited or no experience, and are recruited locally.

Ten percent of workers had attained less than high school education whereas 34% were high school graduates. The workers are reasonably well educated, but less so than the tree planting workers surveyed in 1985.

Workers had other skills and experience in a variety of other occupational areas, but 64% were in the five major categories of -

- forestry and logging (20%)
- construction and trades (18%)
- service industries (9%)
- product fabrication, assembling and repairing (9%), and
- farming, horticulture and animal husbandry (8%)

The percentage with experience in forestry and logging was double that of the 1985 tree planter survey.

Accommodation is provided by contractors for the majority of contracts (63%), mostly at no charge to employees (70%).

On average, 74.7% of total 1987 worker income was derived from silviculture contracts, with workers working an average of 19.3 weeks on silviculture projects.

Copies of the 21-page report, A Socio-economic Analysis of Silvicultural Employment Under the 1985-1990 Canada-British Columbia Forest Resource Development Agreement by Deloitte Haskins and Sells are available while supplies last from:

Forestry Canada
Pacific Forestry Centre
506 W. Burnside Road
Victoria, B.C. V8Z 1M5

Please ask for FRDA Report #067 when ordering.