Current Biomass Status of Red Alder in Coastal British Columbia – FRDA Report 115

This memo summarizes a report prepared by Nawitka Resource Consultants of Victoria, funded by FRDA and the Energy from the Forests (ENFOR) Program, which brings together and reviews information concerning red alder (Alnus rubra Bong.) as a forest resource in coastal British Columbia. The consultant investigated a variety of public and private sources to identify the status of inventory and management information and the current level of utilization. The report includes numerous tables and figures that present information on volume estimates, distribution, site information, breakdown of pure versus mixed stands, and an indication of the area of forest land involved.

The report covers ecology and tree physiology, silvics and regeneration, growth and yield, soil improvement and nitrogen fixation as well as red alder control and protection. In general, the author found that information was lacking on managing second growth alder as a forest crop in both pure stands and as a part of a mixed stand. Some work was reported on stand density, but gaps were noticeable in both natural and artificial regeneration, stand tending relative to growth rates and forest product objectives, and yields under managed and treated conditions. Some regeneration research had been carried out along with limited seeding culture and development. Insects and disease protection had received only minor coverage. Also, little was known about what hazards existed for second growth alder stands.

Information presented on utilization indicates that both an international and U.S. Pacific Northwest market exists for alder products. Considerable technical information, developed largely in the U.S., is included on specifications, prices, and other market details.

Opportunities for primary manufacture appear to be well known and while interest is keen, a combination of offered prices and inadequate supply information appear to be impeding increased utilization. If, in the future, market prices improve, utilization would be expedited by increased information on stand locations, quality, and accessibility.

Information presented in the report suggests that additional inventory and inventory related data is required to support and encourage utilization of the alder resource. Private industry requires more precise information at a local level concerning stand merchantability and quality, as well as location and accessibility in order for them to log, transport, manufacture and ship alder products.

Public sector agencies require more information on the resource to plan the best use and allocation of the species. This must include growth and yield information, age class distributions, and stocking information.

Copies of the 30-page report Current Biomass Status of Red Alder in Coastal British Columbia, FRDA Report 115, by M.R.C. Massie, Nawitka Resource Consultants, are available, while supplies last from:

Forestry Canada
Pacific Forestry Centre
506 West Burnside Rd.
Victoria, B.C.
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Please request FRDA Report No. 115 when ordering.