



Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative

President's Report for the 2019/2020 Year

August 6, 2020

Welcome everyone, to SIFCo's 14th Annual General Meeting.

I am munching on peas picked fresh from the garden as I write this. Any gardener will know that eating fresh peas while preparing for an AGM normally prepared for in late April, is incongruent. But here we are in August, carefully spaced in our chairs, in the garage, with the tires; ready to look back on another year of operations. With the deferral of our AGM, the beginning of our last year seems like light years ago, for that matter so does the end of it, January 31st 2020. So much has happened since.

In recent months, living through a time of uncertainty and angst, I have been particularly appreciative of this valley, our home. I am grateful that I have chosen to live in a place where we can provide for ourselves, for each other; where we can hold each other up, pull each other along. Where we support each other in claiming what we know to be important; fresh air, clean water, healthy forests, and room to breathe. I am proud to be associated with community members so dedicated to improving the quality of community life for all in our valley.

The new spacious office configuration was invaluable in allowing SIFCo staff to continue working through Covid 19 limitations, but our ability to keep our WUI crew working was significantly impacted due to the burning restrictions. Some work in the field did get done, but it remains to be seen, what our operating conditions will be in the fall and moving forward. We cannot see what is around the corner, but we continue to plan, ready to work with conditions as they present themselves.

So I will continue my report in that spirit, one step at a time, in the here and now, trusting that we will continue to adapt as life on the planet unfolds.

Projects During 2019

Type 1: Wildland Urban Interface Management, thin from below

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| • Village of Slocan Phase 2 | 10 hectares | complete |
| • Silverton.3 | 18 hectares | complete |
| • Kokanee | 7 hectares | complete |
| • Anderson | 11 hectares | complete |
| • Anderson | 23 hectares | in progress |

Type 2: Partial cut harvesting with post harvest clean-up

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|-------------|
| • Hewitt | 57 hectares | complete |
| • Hewitt fir beetle | 17 hectares | in progress |
| • Bannock West | 18 hectares | complete |
| • Bannock East | 21 hectares | in progress |

Type 4: Fuel Management for habitat restoration and ecosystem resiliency

- | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|
| • Trozzo Creek | 88 hectares | in progress |
| • Winlaw/Trozzo Creek | 800 hectares | in progress |
| • Ponderosa | 150 hectares | in progress |

Type 5: Wildland Urban Interface Retreatment

- | | | |
|----------|-------------|----------|
| • Trozzo | 10 hectares | complete |
|----------|-------------|----------|

Other Projects:

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------|
| • Community Wildfire Protection Plan North | | complete |
| • Community Wildfire Protection Plan South | | complete |
| • Slocan Valley Wildfire Resiliency Program | | in progress |
| • Winlaw Creek Restoration | | in progress |
| • Documentaries | | |
| ○ Type 1, Type 2, Type 3, Type 4 & Type 5 | | complete |
| ○ How to Create a Strategic Landscape Level Plan | | complete |
| ○ Slocan Lake Stewardship Society | | complete |
| ○ Valhalla Wilderness School | | in progress |
| ○ Slocan Valley Wildfire Resiliency Program | | in progress |
| ○ Slocan River Streamkeepers | | in progress |
| ○ Wildfire Resiliency | | in progress |

As we discussed last year, the funding landscape is ever on the move. Last year, UBCM's Strategic Wildfire Prevention Initiative (SWPI), was replaced by the Community Resiliency Investment Program (CRIP); this year the Forest Enhancement Society of B.C. (FESBC) was replaced by the Wildfire Risk Reduction (WRR) program, administered through FLNRORD. Each change of program, means onerous amounts of work to adapt to a new funding scheme (read "lots of work for no greater return") and the possibility of having to work within a program not well suited to the priorities of a Community Forest. This year, Stephan Martineau and Tom Bradley worked with the BCCFA in an effort to steer the new WRR funding program in ways that would allow Community Forests to do WUI work more effectively on our area based tenures. Their work is not yet reflected in the WRR program, but we're hoping that adjustments will be made to better accommodate us going forward. We have been awarded through WRR, the opportunity to develop three WUI prescriptions on our land-base; Alwyn 8, Bannock 14 and Trozzo 20.

FESBC, a WUI funding program that has worked well for us, is being reconsidered by the province and could end. They have not spent all of the funds that were originally allocated to them and SIFCo still has \$1.1 million in funding applications, unapproved, sitting on their shelves. There is a possibility that FESBC will be able to approve some of those applications and provide us with the means to do further work on our 5 year strategic wildfire plan.

We have adopted a logging strategy that springs from our strategic wildfire plan and our goal of creating wildfire breaks on the landscape. Each logging area becomes a wildfire break when we apply a post-harvest WUI fuel mitigation approach. This adds extra costs each time we log. So far, we have been able to cover these costs through WUI funding programs for most of our logging (except for the fir beetle block just completed up Hewitt which we will fund ourselves), but as you can see from the previous conversation, funding for this approach is not a given. In order to be able to keep our commitment to this process, this year the board approved the creation of two reserve bank

accounts, one to cover the costs of Post-Harvest Clean-up, and one for WUI Retreatment, should funding for this become unavailable.

Leadership and Community Involvement in 2019

2019 has seen SIFCo expand the potential of our local community leadership. The Slocan Valley Wildfire Resiliency Program, which Stephan inspired our three villages to pursue, has the potential to change the face of community driven wildfire preparedness. The program has been expanded upon in 2020 to include FireSmart education, events & demonstration projects, emergency planning, & water supply capacity assessments for the 3 villages, among other elements.

Stephan continues to meet annually with other Kootenay/Boundary Community Forest Managers to build relationships and share successes and challenges.

Tom attended a meeting sponsored by the Sechelt Community Forest and did a presentation on our wildfire resiliency/climate change adaptation approach. His presentation was well received.

Stephan facilitated an ecological educational tour of Bannock Point for a group of around 30, organized by Marci Mahr.

We held two open-house meetings as part of our Wildfire Resiliency Program, one in Silverton and one in Slocan.

A public meeting was held in Slocan, regarding the prescribed burn that is planned for the Ponderosa FSR area. Most attendees came in with skepticism. By the end of the meeting, all concerns had been addressed, and residents approved of the project.

We received our first petition; it included 35 signatures and was in response to planned logging and WUI activities in the Dumont Creek area (Winlaw). Signatories did not include contact information so a meaningful response was difficult. We sent a letter to as many of the signatories as we could identify, as well as the Steering Committee members responsible for organizing the petition. All invitations for discussion have gone unanswered. The project was deferred to a later date.

And on the global stage; Stephan was contacted by a consultant, working for the city of Lisbon, Portugal. City leaders in Lisbon have made a commitment to becoming a “smart city”, proactively addressing changes coming their way. They hired a consultant to look at other initiatives happening around the world and she discovered SIFCo. She asked to include our perspective in a presentation to the Lisbon council. Stephan sent her 6 slides that represent a meta-perspective of our work.

Another international point of interest; a presenter at a conference in Brazil, used SIFCo material in their presentation.

In Closing

Thank-you again for attending tonight and supporting the hard work of our staff and our board of directors. It is for love of this valley, and our community, that we commit ourselves to doing our best.

I humbly submit this report,

Lisa Farr, President