



Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative

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President's Report For the Year 2015/2016

May 31th, 2016

I'll begin by welcoming members to our new home, 5645 Hoodikoff Rd. This property was a mere glimmer in our eyes at our last AGM. An offer to purchase had been accepted, but its true value and meaning was not realized until later in the fall of 2015. At that time, we were able to move in, post renovation, and start calling it home.

Thanks to Stephan's negotiating & management abilities, the combined cost of the purchase and a much needed renovation to the office space, equaled the appraised value of the property at the time of the purchase. It has been a good financial investment and an investment in our future.

The building that now houses our office and shop, was originally built as a mechanical shop by Bob Avis, a member of a long time Slocan Valley family. I find some symmetry in working from a piece of land that was integral to one of the families that contributed so much to the early development of this community.

We no longer pay rent. We have a much more functional office space and have been able to consolidate storage of all of our equipment. All of our operations are handled more efficiently and with more ease. We can store trees here before planting them and our crew supervisor even has his own desk. We also have the capacity to store several loads of specialty timber for local markets. Perhaps even the capacity to host our own community events? This purchase demonstrates our presence in, and commitment to, our community.

WILDFIRE/URBAN INTERFACE (WUI)

Our driest spring of record, and the raging wildfires in northern Alberta, have us all feeling moments of panic and urgency as we continue to live with the inadequate level of financial and political support for wildfire/urban interface work across the province. SIFCo continues to work diligently to maximize our efforts on this front and to influence regional and provincial attitudes by developing our own model of a comprehensive approach to wildfire mitigation for populated areas.

Our tenure wide fire behavior modeling project, using the FlamMap5 fire model from US Bureau of Land Management Fire Sciences Program, is being put to use. Tom has completed the data entry for south and north areas. Each area is starting to reveal its peculiarities and patterns which is allowing us to design our most effective strategies on a case by case basis.

In October of 2015, after consulting with Pedro Creek residents, we embarked on our first logging/WUI development area informed by our fire behavior modeling (WP-3). To quote our October Board Meeting minutes: “This area has seen a lot of impact from pine beetles, dying larch and firewood gatherers. It is near a significant wildfire path identified in the wildfire modeling that Tom has done. There is a good degree of separation between this area and previously logged sites in the area. The potential management area is about 8 hectares in size. The area would undergo a commercial harvest and would then be treated as a WUI site. The goal is to create a fairly open area that would be fire resistant – large leave trees and deciduous brush.” The logging was finished in November 2015 and debris has been piled. We are waiting for favourable weather conditions to send our crew in to finish the clean-up component.

We are in the preliminary community planning phase for our next potential development area of this kind. This area is up Paradise Valley Rd. in Winlaw.

Our WUI crew started work again on Silverton’s northern WUI project in February of 2015, for their third season. The recent rains have improved our prospects of finishing this area this spring; if all goes well we should be done in June of 2016.

We are very pleased to be working with the Village of New Denver once again. Late in 2015 New Denver Council voted to pursue more WUI work around the village. Since then, we have developed a prescription for 45 hectares of land that are in need of treatment to make New Denver safer. An operational application has been sent to UBCM and if all goes according to plan, we should be working in the New Denver area for the next two years.

We are very proud to have been involved in ensuring that the three Villages in our community, New Denver, Silverton and Slocan, are all receiving some of the most comprehensive protection against wildfire found anywhere in the Province. Using our new fire behavior modeling to plan management areas on our own landbase, we are moving forward in our commitment to provide a measure of protection to our more rural areas.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SIFCo’s board is clear that our mandate extends beyond our landbase boundaries and its stewardship. This year our involvement in the community included:

- Helping the Dumont Creek Burial Society to do some much needed mapping of their graveyard.
- Continuing to monitor Discovery Venture’s mining activities on Red Mountain; in particular, their road building.
- Making small donations to the Slocan Valley Cultural Alliance and the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network.
- Installing a gate on Rd. 200 at RMRA’s request and determining public access according to their direction.
- Plans to organize workshops for residents on how to do WUI work on private property.

- Working towards a conference on climate change and its affect on forested communities.
- Attendance at the Central Kootenay Invasive Species operational framework meeting and a commitment to reevaluate our approach to managing invasive alien plants on our landbase and in the Slocan Valley.
- And other activities that help make this community a more healthy and sustainable place to live.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Management Areas

2015 was more of a planning year for us, than operational. Our commitment to using our new fire behavior modeling to inform development decisions, meant being patient with the process and allowing it to reveal relevant information as we became familiar with it and with its results.

We undertook only one new management area this year, the WUI area on the Pedro Creek FSR mentioned earlier.

Now that our fire behavior modeling is up and running, we are using it to help us determine the most valuable places to operate in, from a community fire protection perspective. This, of course, is in conjunction with our continued focus on ecosystem-based management.

IN CONCLUSION

It has been a good year. It has been uplifting to make such clear progress in two major areas; the move to our new property and actually using our new virtual fire mapping tool to consider appropriate areas to develop.

It feels to me more and more that we are doing the work that needs to be done. I personally like feeling relevant and useful. And I think SIFCo is becoming more relevant and more useful every year.

I humbly submit this report,



Lisa Farr
President