



Slocan Integral Forestry Cooperative

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President's Report For the Year 2014/2015

May 13th, 2015

I've come to enjoy this annual reflection on SIFCo's achievements each year. Through the process, it is so clearly evident, how much we have evolved and grown into more of the company we set out to create.

We are entering a new phase as an organization. With our start-up phase well and truly behind us, our eyes are on the future. We have gained experience, and through it, a degree of stability and a sense of self, that combine to allow us to act more clearly on some of our larger picture goals. Our board has been in no rush, our feet have remained on solid ground. The continuity of the board over the years has allowed us to make sensible decisions for the day, while continuing a cohesive conversation about what we might build over the long term. Each business decision and activity provides the board with a more nuanced understanding of the context in which we are operating. We have also gathered information over the years; we did a valley wide investigation into smaller businesses that use forestry products; we researched the possibilities around developing local uses for forestry waste. While these information gathering events may not have given immediate fruit, they have contributed useful fodder for conversation, and a fuller understanding of our business and community environment.

Under the guidance of our capable Manager, Stephan Martineau and Forestry Supervisor, Tom Bradley, we have felt our way through many challenges and opportunities, to develop a fuller picture of what could work for us. We discuss, we meander, we imagine... we act.

WILDFIRE/URBAN INTERFACE:

As you all know, it's been a dry winter followed by a dry spring. I sincerely hope that the summer of 2015 does not provide validation for the value of forest fuel mitigation projects, by repeating a fire event like the summer of 2007. Last summer was warning enough with July fires in both Enterprise and Monument Creek basins.

SIFCo continues to promote a WUI approach that would see local communities protected as much as possible from the threat of wildfires, rather than following the patch-work approach that seems to be evident elsewhere. With climate change being a new reality, wild fires are

certainly in our future and we continue to focus on developing plans that will maximize our ability to reduce a fire's capacity to spread.

The Village of Slocan has now undergone two WUI treatment areas, and is protected from the threat of wildfires to as great an extent as forest fuel mitigation work is able to provide.

After completing a WUI project on the south side of the Village of Silverton, SIFCo is working with the village again to do a comparable project to the north. When the second phase is complete, the Village of Silverton will enjoy protection against wildfires, to a degree perhaps unparalleled among small, rural villages in the province.

Later in this meeting, Stephan will do a presentation based on the work that he and Tom have been doing with Bob Gray on our application of wildfire management strategies that can be applied against our whole land-base; strategies that can be integrated with salvage opportunities, firewood generation, and logging. I quote from the minutes of our June, 2014 board meeting, *"Baseline model runs have been completed by Bob Gray. Tom has created some initial maps. He & Stephan agree that we need cartographic improvements – finer gradations. Stephan shared a second generation map showing the results of lighting 1000 random fires. This is something of a worst case scenario – 40 km per hour SW winds in early August. It is clear that this process allows us to see areas that are vulnerable to the movement of fires. Work on this project is continuing."*

We will be the first licensee in the province to develop a tenure wide WUI virtual planning tool. By creating this way of approaching our area, we will be moving our planning strategies from "How can we do the least harm?" to "How can we do the most good?" That excites me.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Community Led Planning

Tom Bradley has been busy meeting with local watershed groups in order to develop community led plans.

RMRA has given direction on Rd. 200, including a decision to request that the gate be locked in the future. Tom also facilitated a field trip with Lucerne students that proved to be stimulating for all involved. As a forestry licensee, SIFCo was unable to have any direct effect on mining interests on Red Mt. but our board stayed apprised of developments as they occurred.

Due to travelling over a long access route to the development areas in the Winlaw/Pedro area, community members developed more rapport with Tom and Stephan as they wound their way to the two planned development areas in their watershed.

In the fall of 2015 we intend to share the results to date, of our landscape wide WUI process with local residents. This will consist of at least several venues being used in order to provide ease of access to all community members.

Community Outreach

We also remain committed to hosting a forward looking conference in 2016, providing a range of work-shops and discussions for both lay people and professionals. We will focus on changes faced by local residents and those in the forestry industry, due to climate change, shifts in economic realities and other factors.

FOREST MANAGEMENT:

A Single Cutting Permit

By the late spring of 2014, we received notice that our single cutting permit was approved. This creates managerial and administrative streamlining, while creating more accountability on the part of logging contractors to report their activities through timely load slips.

Forest Stewardship Renewal

The spring of 2014 also saw the official acceptance by MLFNR of the renewal of our Forest Stewardship Plan. This process allowed us to achieve a final definition of our land-base boundaries which should also result in fewer administrative head-aches in the future.

Salvage

2014 presented SIFCo with two salvage opportunities.

The first was in the Lemon Creek gravel yard which, though not under our direct control, is in our land-base. The gravel pit was increased in size by 2 acres by the Ministry of Highways. SIFCo was able to apply the fallen trees as part of our cut control, as well as reaping the financial reward.

The second salvage opportunity is actually a great example of board planning coming to fruition. When independent loggers applied to MFLNR for a salvage permit to log dead fir near Kokanee Falls, SIFCo's tenure wide salvage license, secured in 2013, gave us a clear mandate to manage the area ourselves. Our salvage license includes an expectation that we actively manage salvage issues on our land-base, so we assessed our options. After field reviews by Tom and Stephan, it was decided that we would approach the area as a regular management area, with all of the forestry management considerations given to other development areas with appropriate community consultation. Another success of this area is that we were able to support local residents, Terry and Vern Gustafson, with employment and access to logs right in their neighbourhood.

Silviculture

In the spring of 2014, we hired our own crew to plant 18,000 trees in the Slocan/Lemon development area. By doing the planting in-house, we were able to purchase an ATV and planting gear, and still spend less than if we had contracted the job out. In house planting also gave us a great deal of quality control as well as more work for our dedicated crew.

Management Areas

In addition to the two salvage areas discussed earlier, 2014/2015 saw the completion of two additional management areas after much public consultation; The Red Mountain area near Alwyn Creek and the Smallwood FSR area in the Winlaw/Pedro watersheds.

IN CONCLUSION:

Some would say we are lucky to be able to manage our own watersheds, but as a wise man once said, “luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity”. We have been preparing for this for a long time, and we were crazy enough to recognize the opportunity in 2004 when the Province asked for letters of interest regarding Community Forests. We have worked hard for our luck. We will continue to create more opportunities on behalf of our community.

I humbly submit this report,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Farr', is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

Lisa Farr
President