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#FutureofForestry Sustainable Solutions

Summary Report
April 2015





The Public Policy Forum is an independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of government in Canada through enhanced dialogue among the public, private and voluntary sectors. The Forum's members, drawn from business, federal, provincial and territorial governments, the voluntary sector and organized labour, share a belief that an efficient and effective public service is important in ensuring Canada's competitiveness abroad and quality of life at home.

Established in 1987, the Forum has earned a reputation as a trusted, nonpartisan facilitator, capable of bringing together a wide range of stakeholders in productive dialogue. Its research program provides a neutral base to inform collective decision making. By promoting information sharing and greater links between governments and other sectors, the Forum helps ensure public policy in our country is dynamic, coordinated and responsive to future challenges and opportunities.

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Introduction

Canada is the steward of a diverse forest landscape unlike any other region of the world. Our forest management practices are watched carefully by Canadians and the rest of the world. This level of public interest demands robust engagement and stringent oversight from private and public sectors. The challenge moving forward sustainably is to continuously improve existing management systems, while avoiding the creation of additional bureaucracy. To enable the forestry sector to develop deeper and more authentic public confidence, a concerted effort is needed among stakeholders to establish a common understanding, respect, and trust.

On March 27, 2015, the Public Policy Forum, in partnership with the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC) and Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), convened *#FutureofForestry: Sustainable Solutions* in Ottawa. This event brought together a diverse group of leaders to discuss issues of accountability and transparency in the forest industry, and to examine the Canadian context through a global lens. Morning discussions were moderated by David Lindsay, President of FPAC and Glenn Mason, Assistant Deputy Minister of Natural Resources Canada. The event concluded with a luncheon keynote address by Anne Giardini, former President of Weyerhaeuser Canada and current Chancellor of Simon Fraser University. The agenda, participant list, and keynote address are included as appendices to this report.

A Common Understanding: A New Era of Open Data

“The danger for us, I think is ... being defined by others.”

–Pierre Bernier, Canadian Forest Service, Natural Resources Canada

As Canada’s forests are primarily publicly owned, data collection and dissemination are in the public domain. With the advent of open data, access to information is less expensive, quicker, and more easily accessible. Stakeholders worldwide can initiate research projects and communicate their results online. Data has also become more refined as remote sensing and satellite imaging are increasingly possible. Open data can be a dynamic and innovative way to engage the public as it enables reporting on forestry practices, facilitating communication and the sharing of best practices around the world.

Although an open platform increases the global profile of Canada’s forests, sometimes data may be repurposed, stripping the material of its context. To address this concern, the discussion focused on increasing transparency and accountability measures. Researchers have an opportunity to clearly feature the distinct properties of the data they collect so that the integrity of the samples is preserved and ensured for users. These distinctions are particularly useful as forest monitoring, data collection and field terminology can vary from country to country. As a result, a well-intentioned researcher may inadvertently compare two datasets that have little in common.

For Canada's forest resource, a large number of diverse indicators are available, shaped by a range of factors. Environmental and social circumstances influence how and what data is collected. From climate change and First Nations rights, to natural disturbances and land use planning, various drivers shape the management of Canadian forests. Although reliable data is imperative for sound decision-making, the scientific community also plays an important role in reconciling diverse priorities in forest management.

HIGH-RESOLUTION MAPS OF 21ST CENTURY FOREST COVER CHANGE

In 2013, *Science* magazine published revolutionary research from Dr. Matthew Hansen from the University of Maryland. Dr. Hansen and his team have compiled information from 650,000 open satellite images to track forest cover change at a resolution of 30 metres. His research includes measurements of ecological change in the quality of forests, offering some indication of changes in biodiversity and carbon storage, for example. To gather data efficiently, Dr. Hansen used Google Earth Engine for natural resources mapping, making his research the most ambitious application of this technology.

Dr. Hansen's results, although innovative, still do not capture the variability in forest cover change. For example, satellite imaging does not distinguish between permanent deforestation and temporary forest loss. Temporary forest loss may be caused by natural disturbances such as fire, insects or extreme weather, or may be part of a larger reforestation strategy. Although Dr. Hansen has developed a comprehensive global forest loss measurement tool, this research serves as a useful example of the need for careful interpretation of publicly available data.

Building Partnerships: Value-Based Decision-Making

"How do you try and do things in a more collaborative way? It's not always easy, [you need to] sit at the table, and share, and have sometimes hard discussions about the different perspectives, the different values that people attach to the same spaces in nature."

–Wynet Smith, Global Forest Watch Canada

Canada's forestry stakeholders continue to improve individual products, business practices, and research, but the next great opportunity lies in forging stronger relationships with external partners. In a time of increasing environmental vigilance, the forestry sector strives to maintain a positive reputation. To navigate this reality, innovative partnerships can lead to new forms of public dialogue. Partnerships with environmental groups and other non-traditional stakeholders increase the visibility of the sector as responsible stewards of Canadian forests. By demonstrating a willingness to collaborate on mutually shared goals, the forestry sector can break down the silos that tend to undermine the impact of tightly-knit communities.

To develop authentic partnerships, value-based approaches allow for divergent groups to develop a common understanding of motivations and objectives for collaboration. Value-based decision-making can help identify those additional, non-traditional partners who may bring important perspectives to a project. A frank dialogue around the underlying values in a partnership can help guide the focus and approach of a project and ensure against false assumptions. Partnerships can also ensure at the outset that all parties agree on priorities and how a project will be measured and evaluated.

Committed to conserve forests as healthy and resilient ecosystems, Canada engages diverse stakeholders in land-use planning for forest management and protection. For example, First Nations are frequently involved in the planning, development and management of local forests, along with industry. Traditional First Nations land use have influenced the forest industry to plan for past, present and future generations of inhabitants while honouring the beliefs and customs that influence local decision-making. Similarly, First Nations, Métis and Inuit businesses are now moving towards greater participation in natural resource development. As stakeholders continue to engage with one another, shared values can inform the scope and tone of a mutually beneficial partnership.

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR PROVINCIAL SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Members of the Canadian Boreal Forest Agreement (CBFA) endorse the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Sustainable Forest Management Strategy as an excellent example of an initiative incorporating a range of social, environmental and economic values. The strategy recognizes forests as necessary for habitat, clean air, clean water and good soil, while also acknowledging that communities depend on industry to sustain their local economies. To develop the strategy, the Province invested heavily in public consultation, offering citizens an opportunity to voice their opinions of cultural heritage embedded in forests. For instance, the Labrador NunatuKavut Community Council, the Nunatsiavut Government and the Innu Nation are working together to explore meaningful ways to engage in forest management planning in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Province is welcoming collaboration from both inside and outside government by asking academia, scientists, environmental advocates, First Nations and the forest industry to collaborate in the next 10 years of sustainable forest management

Effective Management: Regulation, Certification, and Professionalization

“I think that the biggest impacts for certification are not in the places where it already occurs. The biggest impacts will be somewhere else that is not yet certified, once stronger market demand is there.”

—Ben Cashore, Yale University

Participants discussed whether or not the intended effect of improving global forest management practices is truly achieved by using forest management certification. Scientific exploration and experimentation often precede forest management and regulation, yet legislation often drives what is being measured and monitored. This relationship between legislation and scientific exploration can be controversial, as what is legislated often influences what gets measured. The challenge for an engaged public will be to continuously pressure the government to modify regulation criteria to reflect current societal concerns. Additionally, many countries lack the financial resources to administer legislation that is already in place. It was suggested that, in light of these realities, creating new laws and rules in response to changing expectations may not be as efficient as providing the means necessary to enforce existing laws.

For countries like Canada, with well-established ethical and environmental standards for the forestry sector, certification may be less transformative. Canada currently has close to 161 million hectares of forest being sustainably managed by one or more of three globally recognized certification systems — the greatest participation in certification in the world. For similar countries, creating and participating in advocacy coalitions with other forestry stakeholders may produce better results for the forestry industry overall. Although coalitions advocating for baseline programs may be more modest than high standard certification programs, they quickly and naturally garner support. For example, a coalition working to reduce illegal logging might help improve sustainable global forest management practices, as illegal materials drive prices down. Private sector stakeholders have a financial interest in reducing the number of illegally harvested products, and so a coalition can quickly become quite effective. The role for government and public policy, then, becomes crucial for areas that market mechanisms cannot appropriately address, such as land-use planning for conservation. In such cases, the private sector will respond to certification and regulatory efforts as public demand for responsible forestry management grows.

Internal pressure to professionalize has also affected the operations of the industry. Forestry programs have access to new technologies, changing how forestry scientists connect with physical landscapes. Other stakeholders—such as First Nations, naturalists, and informal coalitions and networks—who do not have access to such advanced technology, monitor forest changes using traditional forestry methods. For example, First Nations may notice variability in wildlife in their communities as a direct impact of climate change. The traditional practice of storytelling may provide important insights into key changes in a geographical area over time. While building professional competencies is important for responsible management, the sector can also benefit from a more inclusive approach that leverages community-based knowledge.

Considerations for the Road Ahead

“In the end, it turns out that ethics is not just a subject for the philosophy department. The minute you ask questions about the world and doing business in it, you are in fact asking questions about ethics as well. What is the right thing to do and what is the right way to get a task that will affect the world, often for generations, done.”

–Anne Giardini, former president of Weyerhaeuser Canada

In her keynote address, Ms. Giardini encouraged leaders in the forest industry to consider areas for improving business practices that are external to their normal scope of operations. She also argued that innovative solutions to underlying problems can often be found by thinking unconventionally. Ms. Giardini referred to this space as the *area of authenticity*, where neither partner has a bias or stake in a particular outcome and, therefore, ideas come more freely.

#FutureofForestry: Sustainable Solutions highlighted several areas where Canada’s forestry sector already leads by example. But perhaps in typical Canadian fashion, the sector is not boastful of its progress. The industry is continuously improving and setting increasingly difficult challenges for itself. Its efforts are considered exemplary at the international level. Although Canada is a world leader in sustainable forestry practices, participants in the event identified some recommendations for moving forward.

Recommendations:

- Improving access to industry data will enable the public to explore more innovative ways to use this information.
- Building more effective partnerships across sectors will help identify common interests and increase information sharing.
- Investing in greater public engagement will help the forestry sector to better communicate best practices, establish shared values and build common understanding.
- Creating opportunities for global comparisons and collaboration will help the forestry sector build on national efforts in promoting sustainable forest management.

#FutureofForestry Sustainable Solutions

Friday, March 27, 2015

8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Canadian Museum of Nature, Barrick Salon

Ottawa, ON

8:30 a.m.	Arrival and networking
8:45 a.m.	Opening remarks by David Mitchell, President and CEO, Canada's Public Policy Forum
9:00 a.m.	Accountability and transparency in the forestry sector Moderator: David Lindsay, President & CEO, Forest Products Association of Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pierre Bernier, Research Scientist, Forest productivity and climate change, Canadian Forest Service, Natural Resources Canada • Andre Morriseau, Director, Awards and Communications, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business • Wynet Smith, Executive Director, Global Forest Watch Canada
10:30 a.m.	Break
10:45 a.m.	The global context Moderator: Glenn Mason, Assistant Deputy Minister Canadian Forestry Service, Natural Resources Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ben Cashore, Professor, Yale University • Janette Bulkan, Assistant Professor, University of British Columbia • Aran O'Carroll, Executive Director, Canada Boreal Forest Agreement Secretariat
12:15 p.m.	Lunch
12:40 p.m.	Keynote address by Anne Giardini, former Canadian President of Weyerhaeuser and currently Simon Fraser University's Chancellor: "Building and Sustaining Trust"
1:10 p.m.	Discussion moderated by David Mitchell
1:45 p.m.	Closing remarks by David Lindsay, President & CEO, Forest Products Association of Canada
2:00 p.m.	Adjournment

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Friday, March 27, 2015
Ottawa, ON

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